

A

FRIENDLY and COMPASSIONATE

ADDRESS

To all serious and well disposed

METHODISTS;

IN WHICH

Their Principal Errors concerning the *Doctrine of the New Birth*, their *Election* and the *Security of their Salvation*, and their Notion of the *Community of Christian Mens Goods*, are largely displayed and represented.

To which is added,

A

SERMON

Lately Preached in the Parish Church of *Craike*,
in the County of *Durham*,

On MATT. XVI. 24.

IN WHICH

The Doctrine of *Self-Denial* and *taking up the Cross*, as required by the Gospel, is duly stated and considered.

By ALEXANDER JEPHSON, A.B.

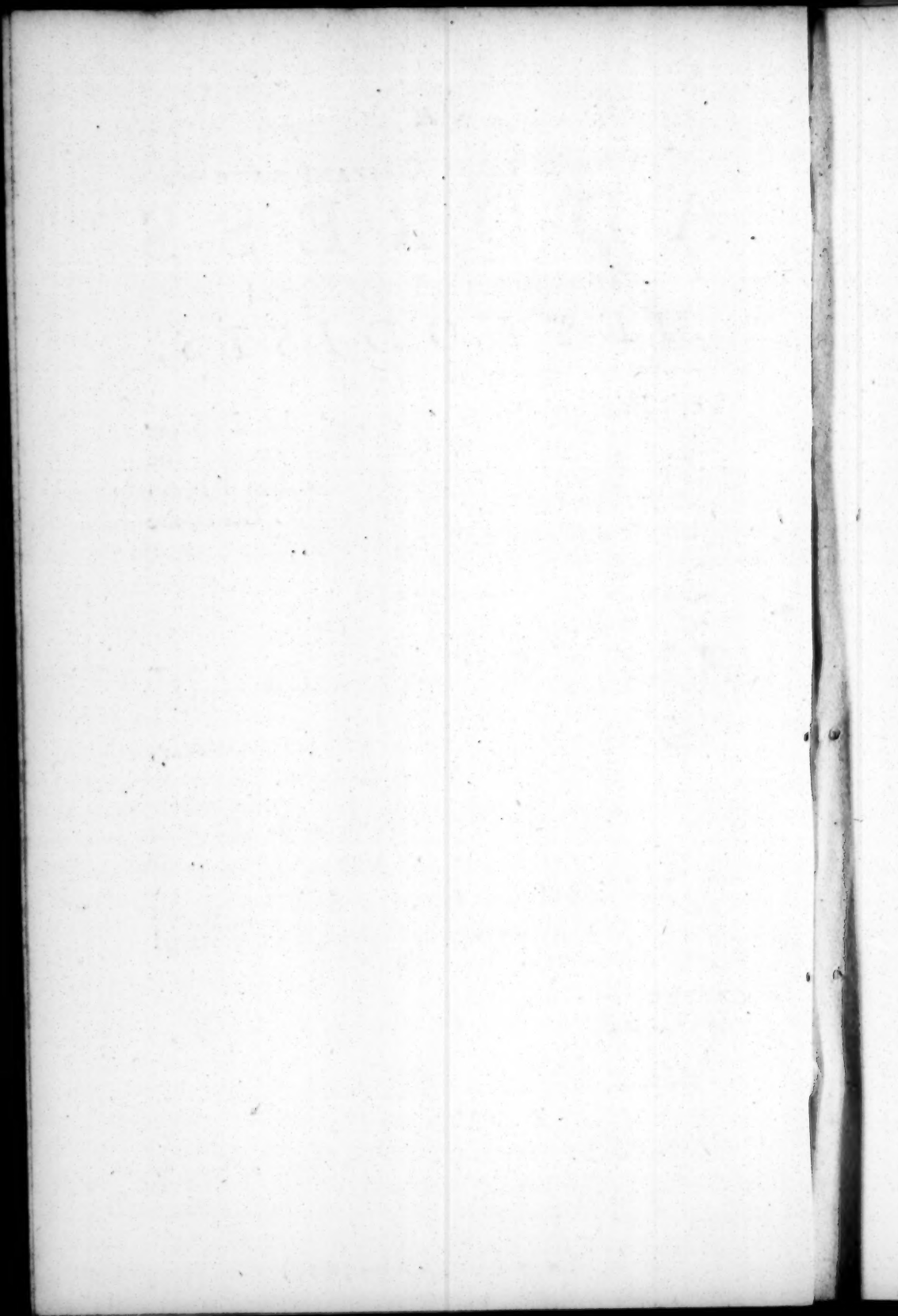
Rector of the said Parish.

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P R E F A C E.

THERE being many excellent Pieces publish'd of late against the Methodists, as those especially by Bishop Gibson, Doctor Stebbing, Trapp, Church, Mr. Downes, and by the Author of the Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared; it may perhaps seem impertinent and unnecessary to offer any Thing further to the Public on this Occasion. But the chief Aim and Design of these excellent Authors hath been to expose the Enthusiasm of the Methodist Preachers, and the many Extravagancies in Doctrine and Practice, which they have inculcated upon their Hearers, together with their Agreement in these Respects with the vilest Hereticks among the Antients, and the most raving Fanatics among the Moderns. And indeed they have acquitted themselves in this Cause, with the greatest Strength of Reason, and the most unanswerable Convictions. But yet there seems to me to be something further wanting in relation to this Controversy, and that is to state clearly and exactly the true Notion of Self-denial, as it is set forth to us in the Gospel; and to shew how far we are obliged by the Laws of Christ to discard the Riches and to renounce the Pleasures of this Life; and This especially as the Methodist Preachers have run into a very great Extreme in this Particular (a). And the Austerities required by them they imagine to have a strong Foundation in the Letter of the sacred Text itself, which enjoins us not only to deny ourselves, but also to take up our Cross daily and follow Christ, Luke ix. 23. And since the best Writer of the Party hath, in a grave and serious Manner, without any of the Fooleries and Extravagancies, used by many of their other Preachers in five or six Chapters of a large Work, endeavour'd to defend and vindicate these Austerities, and labour'd the Point with a more than ordinary Fervency and Zeal (b). For

(a) See *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compar'd*, Part I. p. 22, 31, &c.

(b) *Law on Christian Perfection*, Chap. III. &c.

these Reasons I humbly think that a Discourse upon this Subject must be very proper and necessary at this Season: And I hope it will be of some considerable Use and Service, not only by clearly proving that the Rigours and Austerities so strickly demanded by our new Preachers are without any just Ground and Foundation, but also by exposing the great Folly and infinite Danger of too many Persons in this Nation, who are fatally gone into the other Extreme, and who give themselves up almost wholly to an idle and dissolute Life and a continual Course of worldly Pleasure and Diversion, without any serious Thought of their Condition, and many times to the utter Neglect of the necessary and important Duties of Religion, without which there can be no Salvation; and I hope the Meaness of this Performance will engage some Person to undertake it who is of greater Abilities. And provided there be any Discourse of this Nature published, which may fully answer the Ends above-mentioned, by freeing many of their Superstition and Enthusiasm, and establishing others in the Practice of true and unfeigned Piety and Religion, by whomsoever it shall be set forth, no one will more rejoice thereat than myself, and be ready to pay all due Honour and Respect to the Person who is the happy Instrument of so great a Blessing to the Nation, as the removing of Superstition, the edifying the Church, and the saving the Souls of our Fellow Christians and Brethren in the great Day of the Lord Jesus.

I shall only add, that the better to prepare the Way for a kind Reception of the ensuing Discourse, I have here prefixed a Friendly Address to all serious Methodists, in which I have fully represented to them their great Errours and Mistakes concerning the New Birth, Election, &c. which are not only the fatal Means of drawing them into those Rigours and Austerities so justly censured in the said Discourse; but are moreover of the most mischievous Effect and Consequence to them in this present Life as well as that which is to come, and therefore deserve to be more largely considered.




A

Friendly and Compassionate

ADDRESS

To all pious and well disposed Persons among the
METHODISTS.

Dear Fellow Christians and Brethren:

 **B** **EFORE** I offer the following Address to you, I earnestly intreat you to believe, that it proceeds from no other Motive than a hearty and sincere Regard to your true Happiness, and an Endeavour to convince you of some fatal and dangerous Errors into which you are unhappily fallen, and which may be of pernicious Consequence to you both in this Life and the next. For this Reason I apply myself only to such of you who are serious and well disposed: For as to those who devote themselves blindly and implicitly to the Conduct and Direction of such Teachers who pretend to an immediate Inspiration from God, and intimate Conversation with him, and whose powerful Preaching hath such a wonderful Effect upon their Hearers as not only to fill their Minds with the utmost Horror and Confusion, but also to cause them to fall directly upon the Ground in dreadful Shriekings and Groanings, Tremblings and Convulsions, and to lie there for some Time

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as if they were dead, 'till they are recovered by their Prayers and Endeavours (d), I would not be supposed to apply myself to them; for I really look upon all this to be such a Scenary of Enthusiasm and Imposture as deserves the utmost Abhorrence of all good Men, and cannot possibly be received and encouraged by any Persons who are not utterly destitute of common Sense and Reason. And to endeavour the Conviction of Persons who are thus insatuated by Reasoning and Argumentation, would be as vain and idle an Attempt as to read a Lecture of Philosophy to those who are in *Bedlam*. With such Persons as these I would not desire to be any farther concerned than to pray earnestly to God to restore them to their right Senses and Understanding. But as for such of you who are serious and devoutly disposed, and tho' you do now and then communicate with the Establish'd Church, in the public Prayers and Sacrament, yet very frequently give up yourselves to the Direction of these new Teachers, upon the Pretence of better Edification, the more effectually escaping the Pollutions and Defilements of a wicked World, and the attaining to a greater Certainty and Security of your eternal Salvation; I humbly beg leave to offer some few Things to your serious Consideration, in hopes that by the Grace of God you will be convinced of some fatal and dangerous Errors to which you are exposed by your new Instructions. And,

First, Concerning your Notion of the *New Birth*, that it is wrought instantaneously in your Minds by the powerful Operation of the Divine Spirit, and of which you have a sensible Feeling and Perception (e). This Notion is of very mischievous Effect and Consequence, as it naturally tends to check all Endeavours towards the Amendment and Reformation of Sinners, and

(d) See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Part III, pag. 23 to 28, pag. 32, &c. pag. 165, 175.

(e) *Vid.* the same, Part I. pag. 41. Dr. Stebbing's Sermon on the *New Birth*, pag. 7, 8.

and their Progress and Improvement in Christian Virtue. But now, that we may speak more fully to the Point itself, we will consider the *New Birth*, or in other Words the *Regeneration* and *Conversion of Sinners*, under these two Heads and Distinctions: *First*, With regard to the Regeneration of Christians at their Baptism; and, *secondly*, With respect to the Conversion of those who after they are baptized fall into the Commission of Sin, and by the Grace of God are recovered to Repentance and Newness of Life. And, *first*, Let us consider the *New Birth* with regard to the Baptismal Regeneration. Now, when any Persons were duly baptized into the Church, there is no doubt but that all their Sins were immediately forgiven, and a new Principle of Piety and Virtue directly instill'd into their Minds by the Grace of God's Holy Spirit: Thus saith the Apostle, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost*, Acts ii. 38. See also Chap. xxii. 16. Titus iii. 5 (f). And some of the antient Fathers have given to us such wonderful Accounts of this Baptismal Regeneration (g), that, if they have not in some degree exaggerated this Matter, they clearly shew that a very uncommon Measure and Portion of God's Grace and Holy Spirit was poured upon the Church in the Primitive Ages of it: And this so manifestly, that, as a learned Divine observes, the Heathens ascribed it to the

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(f) See *Sherlock on Death*, chap, iii, pag: 258.

(g) *Da mihi virum qui sit iracundus, maledicus, effrænatus; paucissimis Dei verbis tam placidum quam ovem reddam. Da cupidum, avarum, tenacem, jam tibi cum liberali dabo. Da libidinosum, adulterum, ganeonem, jam sobrium, castum, continentem videbis, &c. uno enim lavacro malitia omnis abolebitur. — Num quis hæc Philosophorum aut unquam præstitit aut præstare potest?* Lactant. Institut. lib. iii. cap. 25.

Παρά μὲν τοῖς Ἑλλήσιν εἰς τις παίδων, καὶ ἐκ οὗτων εἰς δεύτερος, καὶ εἰς Πολέμων μεταβαλόντες ἀπὸ αἰσῶτος καὶ μοχθηροτάτου ἐφελασθῆσαν· παρὰ δὲ τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἔμόνον τότε οἱ δαίδαλα ἀλλ' αἰεὶ καὶ πολλαπλασίους οἵτινες γινόμενοι σωφρόνων χροῖσθαι. *Origen. adv. Cels. lib. i.*

Influence of Magic (*b*). And tho' the Power of Baptismal Regeneration in those Times was doubtless very extraordinary, yet we know very well from the Discipline of the Primitive Church, that Persons were ordinarily under a long Course of Preparation for Baptism before they were thought worthy to obtain the Effects of that Divine Institution. But, how great soever might be the Influence of Baptismal Regeneration in the Primitive Times, yet it is certain, that, in the ordinary and settled State of the Church, the Case of those who fall into Sins after Baptism, and especially such who have been long subject to the Power of bad Habits, is very different: Such Persons must not expect to be recovered again to Repentance, and to attain to the Habits of Holiness and Virtue, but after much Labour and Pains taken with themselves in the Exercise of Repentance. And, with regard to the latter kind of Sinners here mentioned, the Prophet *Jeremy* hath spoken very severely concerning the great Difficulty of their Repentance: *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil*; chap. xiii. 23. Not that the Prophet means that it is impossible for the greatest Sinners to repent; but it is usual in Scripture to express Things which are very difficult by Terms taken from Things that are impossible (*i*), as is evident from innumerable Passages which might be produced; but it may be sufficient to mention what our Saviour expresses concerning the Difficulty of a rich Man's entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, *Mat. xix. 24.* and *St. Paul* of regaining those to the Christian Profession who had apostatized therefrom, *Heb. vi. 4, &c.* In both which Places the entering
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(*b*) *Scot's Christian Life*, 8vo. vol. III. p. 80.

(*i*) *Sic Arist. Impossibile, inquit, dicitur, aut quod omnino fieri non potest, aut non facile, nec cito nec bene. Sic Jurisconsulti impossibile vocant, quod juxta communem legem aut usum fieri non potest, etiam si privilegio Principis fieri queat. Sic in moribus impossibile dicitur quod usum communem egreditur. Ribera in Hebr. vi. 4.*

of the one into the Kingdom of Heaven, and the renewing the others to Repentance, are represented to be impossible; tho' the Expression in neither of the Places signifieth any more than a great Difficulty. Now tho' there is no doubt but that, in regard to the ordinary State and Condition of Christians, the Grace of the Holy Spirit under the Gospel is much more powerful than under the Law; yet I can never think that God, who is no Respector of Persons, dealt so hardly with his peculiar People in the great Affair of their Repentance and Conversion, that what may now be done by a single instantaneous Touch of the Holy Spirit was by them almost impossible to be accomplished, tho' with their utmost Care and Endeavours. Neither are your own Teachers consistent with themselves in this Matter: For, at the same Time that they so earnestly contend for the Instantaneous Operation of the Holy Spirit in the *New Birth*, they yet allow of themselves as well as others, that they frequently relapse into Sin, and undergo many and great Combats with *Satan*, fall into bitter Agonies and Desertions, and are subject to severe Conflicts and Austerities, before they arrive to a settled State and Perfection therein (*k*). And the Holy Scriptures when speaking of Regeneration represent it to us much in the same Light. In them we are strictly required to work and labour, *Job*. vi. 27, 28. to fight and wrestle, and this not against Flesh and Blood but against Principalities and Powers, *1 Tim.* vi. 12. *Ephes.* vi. 12. to strive to enter in at the strait Gate, *Luke* xiii. 24. with many other Passages which might easily be referr'd to if it were necessary, which plainly shew the great Pains and Labour which we must take in our Christian Callings, before we can attain to the perfect Habits of Holiness and Virtue; and particularly *St. Peter* enjoins us to grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, *2 Pet.* iii. 18. And to use all Diligence to make our Calling
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(*k*) See *Enthusiasm, &c. compared*, Part III. p. 281, 303.

and Election sure, 2 *Pet.* i. 10. And, which is I think sufficient to silence this Controversy for ever, when *St. Paul* had, in *Philip* ii. 13, observed, that in the great Affair of our Salvation God worketh in us *both to will and to do of his good Pleasure*, he does in the Verse immediately preceding expressly mention the Conditions upon which we may expect this Divine Aid and Assistance, *viz.* that we must *work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling*: Of which and the other Places of Scripture now recited, no possible Sense could be made if our Conversion to God were to be wrought only by an immediate and irresistible Impression of the Holy Spirit upon our Minds, without the Concurrence of our own Endeavours. And it will be a vain and idle Attempt in this Case to invalidate the Force of these clear and plain Texts of Scripture, by having Recourse to such Passages as are manifestly figurative and metaphorical, many of which have been frequently alledged upon this Occasion. But I will mention only one or two of the chief and principal of them. Thus when *St. Paul* speaking of the *Ephesians* saith, *You hath he quickened who were dead in Trespases and Sins*, chap. ii. 1; and in Verse 10, *We are his Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works*; some Persons have argued that the Conversion of Sinners is immediately owing to an instantaneous and irresistible Act of God's Grace, without any Pains and Diligence on their Part: Because when God raised the Dead to Life again, or when he created this World, the dead Bodies which were raised did not in the least degree contribute to the Operation of the Divine Power upon them: Nor did the Darkness on the Chaos to the Light which shined thereon. Now it would be a sufficient Answer to this kind of Reasoning to alledge that these Texts of Scripture must needs be only figurative and metaphorical, and therefore nothing can be justly inferred from them, and especially in Opposition to the other Places above named, in which the Use of Mens Endeavours in the Work of Regeneration and Sanctification

Sanctification is clearly express'd. For surely the Holy Scripture does not in any wise contradict itself; and if from the first of these Texts, where the Apostle, speaking of the wretched Condition of the *Ephesians* as being under the Power and Dominion of Sin, pronounces them to be *spiritually dead*, an Argument be drawn from the Condition of such who are dead in the natural Sense; we may as well conclude from *Matt. viii. 22*, where our Blessed Saviour says, *Let the Dead bury their Dead*, that our Lord required that those who were naturally dead should perform the Office of Interrment for others who were in the same State with themselves: And the Argument will hold equally in both Cases, or in neither. And indeed there cannot be a greater Proof of any one's Ignorance in the Scripture Language than to ground and build Theories in Divinity upon some few figurative and metaphorical Texts of Scripture, and especially when they are urged in Opposition to several others which are clear and plain. For it is an established Rule in the Interpretation of Scripture, and indeed of all other Writings whatsoever, *viz.* that when there are many Passages therein which are doubtful and obscure, they must always be accommodated to the Sense of and be explained by such others which relate to the same Point which are evident and certain. This I have shewn at large elsewhere *(l)*; and many learned Divines have spoken fully to the same Purpose. I shall only call to mind the Words of an incomparable Critic on this Occasion: 'If, *saieth he*, Metaphors once
' come to be insisted upon and strained, and Consequences drawn from them, and Doctrines founded,
' and Theories built upon them, they are of very ill
' Consequence, and serve to no other Purpose but to blind
' and obscure the plain and simple Notions of Things,
' and seduce and mislead the Understandings of Men,
' and to multiply Controversies without End *(m)*.'

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(l) Discourse on the Lord's Day, p. 164:

(m) Tillotson, vol. III, p. 478, &c.

There is nothing farther to be observed upon this Head but that as your new Teachers have instructed you that your Regeneration is owing to an Instantaneous Act of God's Holy Spirit, so you have been taught to believe that you have a sensible Feeling and Experience thereof. This Notion hath been sufficiently exposed by the learned Dr. *Stebbing* (n). And to use the Words of the same excellent Author: ' If the Scriptures affirm that the *New Birth* must be a sensible Operation of the Spirit, shew me where it says so; or if you cannot do this, why will you pretend to be wiser than God (o)? ' Our Blessed Saviour speaks in quite a different manner: *The Wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the Sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* John iii. 8 (p). And the Holy Scriptures give us no other Rule whereby we may discover that we are endued with the Spirit than by bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit. Thus says St. Paul: *If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.* Gal. v. 25. *They that are after the Spirit, do mind the Things of the Spirit.* Rom. viii. 5. And to give a very clear and evident Proof of this Matter, where St. Paul says in Galat. vi. 15. *That in Christ Jesus neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor Uncircumcision, but a New Creature* (which is only another Expression for the *New Birth*) (q), he tells us what is meant by this *New Creature* in the two parallel Texts; in the first of which he explains the *New Creature* by *keeping the Commandments of God*, 1 Cor. vii. 19. And in the second, by *Faith which worketh by Love*, Galat. v. 6. which comes exactly to the same Sense as our Lord observes in John xiv. 15. (See also 1 John v. 3.) And this

(n) Sermon on the *New Birth*, p. 7, &c.

(o) Ibid. p. 11, 16.

(p) Vid. *Whitby* in loc.

(q) Vid. *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Part III. p. 280,

this is the only rational Evidence that any Man can have that he is born of God; since, as the Apostle informs us, *whatsoever is born of God overcometh the World.* 1 John v. 4. And a Man cannot be under a greater Delusion of the Devil, which will be of the most mischievous Consequence to him, than to ground his Regeneration and Sanctification on any other Principle. And it is of no Force at all in this Argument, that our Church declares in her Seventeenth Article, that the Godly *feel in themselves the working of the Spirit of Christ*, which one of your Authors hath lately objected to us (r): For the Word *feel* in Holy Scripture, as well as other Writings, signifieth any Perception either of the Body or Mind, whether sensible or intellectual. Thus saith Holy Job, *the Wicked shall not feel Quietness in his Belly*, xx. 20. i. e. *he shall not know it*, saith a learned Commentator from the *Hebrew* (s); as much as to say, that notwithstanding all his Pains and Labour he shall not have any true Peace and Satisfaction in himself. And the Apostle, speaking of the *Gentiles* confirmed in Habits of Sin and Wickedness, saith, they are *past feeling*, Eph. iv. 19. The Expression is plainly figurative, and implies no more than, as a judicious Interpreter (t) renders it, *who are insensible of the Vileness of their Actions*: Or, in other Words, *who have no due Apprehension of the dreadful Danger of their Condition*. And in this Sense the Word *feel* is understood in the Article of our Church. For, when the Article affirms that the Godly *feel in themselves the working of the Spirit*, it explains the Manner of their feeling it by the Words immediately following, *viz. The mortifying the Works of the Flesh, and drawing up their Minds to high and heavenly things*. And no one who is not an utter Enthusiast can feel or know that he hath the Spirit of God in him any other way,

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(r) *Methodism displayed*, pag. 23:

(s) *Chappelow* in loc.

(t) *Whitby* in loc.

than by *bringing forth the Fruits of the Spirit*; as hath been clearly shewn. But,

Secondly, Another Error into which I humbly think you are unhappily fallen, and that in consequence of your Notions of the *New Birth*, is that concerning the Assurance which you imagine yourselves to have of your final Perseverance and Salvation: And some of your Teachers have advanced very strange Things on this Head (*u*); tho' sometimes we find them a little wavering and doubtful in this Particular (*w*). But there is as little Foundation in Holy Scripture for this Notion of Assurance, as for that of the *New Birth* in the Manner which you understand it. The Apostle requireth of all Christians, that they *be clothed with Humility*, 1 *Pet.* v. 5. And it is the express Character of *St. Paul*, that he served the Lord *with all Humility*, *Acts* xx. 19. And our Blessed Saviour pronounces a Blessing upon the *poor in Spirit*, that *theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven*, *Matt.* v. 3 (*x*.) And he further gives us this severe Caution, *viz.* that, when we have done all that is commanded us, we should say *we are unprofitable Servants*, *Luke* xvii. 10. And we may plainly see the great Folly and Danger of spiritual Pride in the Parable of the *Pharisee* and the *Publican*, which was particularly directed by our Lord against those who *trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others*, *Luke* xviii. 9, &c. And there are many other Passages of Scripture which sufficiently expose the great Weakness and Mischief of the Notion we are now considering: But I will only lay before you two or three, which are very full and clear to the Purpose, and to which no rational Answer can be given. Thus saith *St. Paul*,

(*u*) Vid. *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Part I. pag. 43, Part II. pag. 103, 105.

(*w*) Vid. *ibid.* pag. 103.

(*x*) That the Expression of *poor in Spirit* may be here understood of Humility as well as of the Contempt of the World, as it is taken by others, see *Maldonat and Whitby in loc.*

St. Paul, Let him that thinketh he standeth, i. e. (as *Dr. Hammond* admirably paraphrases it) ‘ Let him that is the most spiritual among you, and that seems to himself to stand the firmest,’ *take heed lest he fall*, 1 Cor. x. 12. *St. Peter*, when he requires them to whom he wrote his second Epistle to *grow in Grace and in the Knowledge of Christ*, he prescribes this to them as the Means to prevent their falling from their Steadfastness, *Chap. iii. 17, 18.* And that which I think will be absolutely decisive in this Case is the Caution which the Apostle gives to the *Philippians*, viz. that they should work out their Salvation *with Fear and Trembling*, *Chap. ii. 12* ; for which surely there could be no Occasion, if after the Operation of God upon them they were certain of their final Perseverance, and absolutely secure of their Salvation. And that which will render this Argument utterly unanswerable is the Example of *St. Paul* himself, the greatest of the Apostles, who after his infinite Labours and Perils, which he underwent in the Discharge of his Ministry, was yet so jealous of his own Conduct, that he kept his Body under, and brought it into Subjection, *lest by any means, when he had preached to others, he himself should be a Cast-away*, 1 Cor. ix. 27. If then so great and eminent a Saint as *St. Paul* was had any just Grounds for such an Apprehension, sure it will very ill become us, who are all great Sinners, to be too confident of ourselves, and to proclaim to all the World the undoubted Certainty of our Salvation. And we should above all things beware of this Confidence, since it is too apt to puff up ourselves with spiritual Pride, and fill us with uncharitable Censures and Contempt of our Brethren; as is generally to be observed in such Persons who warmly espouse this dangerous Opinion (y). And it will be a vain and idle Attempt to invalidate the Force of these Texts

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(y) See *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Part II. pag. 116, 117.

by alledging that St. *John* lays it down as the Mark and Character of one that is born of God, that he *cannot sin*, 1 Epist. iii. 9. which must surely give to such an one the utmost Security of his Salvation. (For the Apostle does not here signify that a truly regenerate Person can't possibly fall into Sin after his Regeneration:) For this would not only be utterly inconsistent with all those Places of Scripture which I have just now cited, which require the very best of Christians to be humble and fearful of themselves, lest they should fall from their Stedfastness, but it would also flatly contradict what St. *John* had himself before advanced in the same Epistle, viz. *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us*, Chap. i. 8. And indeed the Notion itself is sufficiently refuted, not only by every good Man's Experience (*), but also by that very true Observation of the Wise Man, (which always hath and ever will be verified in the whole Race of Mankind, our Blessed Saviour *Christ* excepted, 1 Pet. i. 19. chap. ii. 22.) viz. *there is not a just Man upon Earth that doeth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20. And therefore the Meaning of the Apostle in this Text can be no more than this, viz. that a truly regenerate Person cannot (considered as such) sin deliberately and wilfully; or in case he should through Surprise and Inconsideration, or the Power of an over-bearing Temptation, plunge himself into the Guilt of any such Sin, he would by no means justify himself therein, but, after the Example of *David* and St. *Peter*, he would immediately by the Grace of God recover himself by an hearty Repentance, and upon no Account indulge himself in the habitual Practice of any kind of Wickedness. And this is the Sense which is
given

(*) *Quaquam enim peccatum esse non potest, nisi quod libere fit; ab omni tamen peccato omnino & semper abstinere, supra humanam est conditionem: unde cognatum homini esse, peccare, inter Philosophos, Socrates, Hierocles, Seneca; inter Judæos, Philo; inter Historicos, Thucydides; inter Christianos, plurimi prodiderunt. Grot. de Jur. de Belli & Pacis, lib. ii. cap. xx. §. 19.*

given of this Passage of Scripture by the most learned Commentators: And not that any Person can in this Life, by Virtue of any Principle of Regeneration, be raised up to a State of sinless Perfection. And in this Sense the Word *cannot* here used by St. *John* is frequently understood in Scripture and in the best Classic Writers, and signifieth the same as *will not*: And many times it is said of Persons that they cannot do such and such Things, not for want of Power to do them, but that the doing of them would be inconsistent with their Character and Profession, or their Circumstances and Condition. And in this Sense the Word *cannot* is manifestly used in *Gen.* xxxvii. 4. *Acts* iv. 20. *John* vii. 7. And in the same (+) Light it is ascribed to God Himself in *Gen.* xix. 22. From all which we may justly conclude, that this Text of St. *John* does not give the least Countenance to the Notion of the Assurance of Salvation, which we are now considering. And because this confident Assurance of their own Salvation, and their hard Judgment of those who want it, cannot be rationally supported on any other Ground than the *Calvinistical* Notion of Election and Reprobation, which is warmly contended for by the *Moravians* (z), and seems to be espoused by too many Persons among yourselves, I shall therefore intreat your Patience whilst I spend a few Words in the Examination of this Opinion, and in shewing that it is not only inconsistent with common Sense and Reason, but also (which some Men will hardly be brought to believe) manifestly contrary to the clearest and plainest Declarations of Holy Scripture.

Now as to the *first*: It is intirely repugnant to common Sense and Reason to imagine that God (of whom the Scripture gives this very just Account, that *He is no Respecter of Persons*) should manifest so much Partiality towards his Creatures, as to select some few
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(+) Vid. Dr. Bentley's *Sixth Sermon at Boyle's Lectures*, 4to. pag. 9 and 10.

(z) See *The Moravians compared and detected*, pag. 52, &c. *Methodism display'd*, pag. 23.

of them only as Objects of his Love and Favour, and to leave all the rest under a fatal and unavoidable Sentence of Reprobation, and this by an irreversibile Decree antecedent to all Regard of their Qualifications and Behaviour: For this is not only contrary to common Justice, but inconsistent also with the very lowest Degree of Goodness; and much more with that Infinite Goodness, which is an essential Attribute of God (a). And for my Part, (leaving every one to judge for himself in this Case) tho' I really think that the Being of God is strictly demonstrable, yet I would much rather chuse to believe there was no God at all, than to entertain so monstrous, horrid, and cruel a Notion and Conception of Him. And then,

Secondly, It is no less repugnant to the most express and positive Declarations of the Holy Scriptures, in which God very frequently and earnestly calls and invites the worst of Sinners to Repentance: All which would be nothing else than solemn Mockery and Dissimulation, if they were precluded from all Possibility of Repentance and Conversion to God by a fixed and irreversibile Decree. It may seem needless to cite any particular Text of Scripture in so plain a Case. But yet, for the better Satisfaction of those who are come into this unfortunate way of thinking, I shall call to mind some few of them, which are the chief and principal. Thus, *as I live saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. God would have all Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth, 1 Tim. ii. 4. Our Blessed Saviour, speaking to Jerusalem, says, How often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not, Matt. xxiii. 37. And again our Lord saith*

(a) Vid. *Tilletson*, Vol. II. pag. 438 9, 621-2, 376. Vol. III. pag. 99.

saith to the *Jews*, *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have Life*, John v. 40. The same Apostle observes, that *God so loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life*, chap. iii. 16; which is consonant to what the Apostle to the *Hebrews* lays down in *Chap.* ii. 9, that *Christ should taste Death for every Man*. These and many other Passages which might be produced, if it were necessary, are so full and clear against the Doctrine of absolute Election and Reprobation, that it can no more be reconciled with them, than Blackness of Darkness can abide and remain before the Sun in its meridian Brightness. And, if there be any other Places in the Holy Scriptures which may seem to favour this Doctrine, they must, according to the Rule of Interpreting Scripture before-mentioned (b), as being doubtful and obscure at least, be accommodated to, and qualified by those Texts which are clear and certain. But, however, because those who countenance this Doctrine, lay a great Stress upon such Portions of Scripture, it will therefore, I judge, be very necessary to take them into Consideration.

Now those who argue for the Doctrine of absolute Election and Reprobation from the Holy Scriptures rely and depend chiefly upon these two Particulars: *First*, Upon what *St. Paul* delivers in his IXth and XIth Chapters of his Epistle to the *Romans*; which they esteem to be a very certain and undoubted Proof of this Matter: and in which there are some particular Expressions to be found, which they imagine cannot possibly square with any other Hypothesis. But now, as many learned Commentators (c) have evidently shewn, these Chapters do in no wise relate to the Doctrine of Predestination, but to the calling of the *Gentiles* into the Christian Church upon the Rejection of the

(b) See above, pag. 7.

(c) See particularly *Whitby* and *Lock* upon these Chapters:

the *Jews* for their Infidelity and Disobedience; as will manifestly appear to any one who will read them with due Care and Attention. And whereas it is said in the 11th and 12th Verses of the IXth Chapter, that *the Children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her (Rebecca), The Elder shall serve the Younger.* Upon which Text the *Predestinarians* lay the greatest Strefs: It is very certain that these Words have not the least Relation to this Point of Doctrine, but are brought in here by the Apostle by way of Similitude and Comparison to prove that the *Gentiles* should be taken into the Church, and be accounted as the true Seed of *Abraham*, tho' they were not so by natural Descent and Generation. And the Argument of *St. Paul* in the Context is plainly this, that as when God promised a Son to *Abraham*, who should be his Heir, *Gen. xv. 4.* and in whose Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed, *Gen. xxii. 18.* this Inheritance did not descend upon *Ishmael*, tho' he was the First-born, but upon *Isaac*, the younger Brother: And as when *Rebecca* had conceived of *Isaac*, and Twins were in her Womb, God Almighty had resolved before the Children were born that the Elder should serve the Younger; which was accordingly brought to pass in the Reign of King *David*, *2 Sam. viii. 14:* And that the Posterity of the younger Son should inherit the Land of *Canaan*, which was a Type of the spiritual Blessings of the Gospel, (for the Words do not concern the Persons of *Esau* and *Jacob* themselves, but their Posterity, as appears from *Gen. xxv. 23.*) (d). So in like manner it pleased God to receive the *Gentiles* into the Church, and to account them as the true Seed of *Abraham*, tho' they were not so by natural Right and Generation. For thus says the Apostle, *the Children*

(d) Vid. *Whitby* on *Rom. ix. 11:*

children of the Promise were counted for the Seed, ver. 8 ; which he afterwards shews in the third Chapter of his Epistle to the *Galatians*. And when it is said, that this Election was made not of or from Works, but of him that calleth ; this does not signify that God preferr'd the Posterity of *Jacob* to that of *Esau* without any just Grounds for so doing : For God, who is infinite in Wisdom, never does any thing without sufficient Reason. But the Meaning is, that as the Election of *Jacob's* Seed was made before the Children were born, and consequently no Works which they had done could contribute to this Appointment, tho' God had doubtless very wise Reasons for giving this Preference to the Family of *Jacob*, yet he is in no wise obliged to give us any Account of them, but they are to be intirely resolved into his good Will and Pleasure ; which is the exact Sense and Meaning of what *St. Paul* remarks at the 20th and 21st Verses of this Chapter, concerning the Potter having Power over the Clay to make one Vessel to Honour, and another unto Dishonour. For here it is not signified, that God in Virtue of His supreme Dominion as He might appoint some Persons to eternal Salvation arbitrarily, without any Consideration of their good Works, so on the other Side he might irreversibly decree the everlasting Damnation of others without any Regard to their Demerits. For this, as I have now shewn, is not only inconsistent with God's Perfections, but also manifestly contrary to the whole Tenor of the Sacred Writings. But the Meaning is, that in the Disposals of God's Favour with respect to Nations and Kingdoms, and the Preference of one Family or People before another, tho' God does not act in any of these Cases without the best and wisest Reasons, yet, as the Sovereign of the Universe, He does not always think proper to acquaint us with them ; but refers them all to the Counsels of His Infinite Wisdom. And when God saith in the 13th Verse of this Chapter, (upon which some Persons build very much) that, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated ;* the Word

bated is not to be understood in the vulgar Sense thereof in our Language, but as the Expression was used by the antient *Jews* to signify an inferior Degree of Love: In which Sense it is used by our Saviour in *Luke* xiv. 26. *If any Man cometh to me, and hateth not his Father and Mother, &c. he cannot be my Disciple.* For it would be highly absurd to suppose that the Word *hateth* here used by our Lord should be taken in its proper Sense. And the parallel Text in *Matt.* x. 37. plainly shews that it is to be received in the manner I have now explained, viz. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, is not worthy of me.* And in *Gen.* xxix. the Expression is very manifestly used in this Sense: Thus it is said in Verse the 31st, that, when God saw that *Leah* was *bated*, he opened her Womb; and how that Hatred of *Leah* is to be interpreted may be clearly seen in the Verse foregoing, where we read that *Jacob* loved *Rachel* more than *Leah*; and, though it pleased God in the ordering of the Blessing promised to *Abraham* to prefer *Jacob* before *Esau*, yet we find that *Esau* had a very considerable Blessing bestowed on him by his Father *Isaac*, *Gen.* xxvii. 39, 40. But that which will fully demonstrate, that the two Chapters we are now considering relate only to the Purpose abovementioned, and not to the final Estate and Condition of Men in the other World, is that severe Caution and Advice which *St. Paul* gives to the *Gentiles*, in the XIth Chapter, upon their being admitted into the Christian Church contrary to the Rights of Nature, viz. that they should not therefore boast against the natural Branches (the *Jews*,) and that they should not be high-minded, but fear, ver. 20. For, saith he, if God spared not the natural Branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee, ver. 21. And the Apostle here plainly shews them, that, notwithstanding the Severity of God to the *Jews* in cutting them off from the Church, they might yet, if they would not still abide in their Unbelief, be admitted into the Church again, and the *Gentiles* be excluded from it, if they should not continue in their

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Christian Faith and Profession; which is what the Apostle here signifieth by the Figures of the natural and engrafted Branches, and the good Olive Tree and that which is wild by Nature, *ver. 17 to 25.*

Now if these Chapters had related to the Doctrine of Election and Reprobation, as some even learned Men have conceived, this Re-admission of the *Jews* into the Church, and the Exclusion of the *Gentiles* after they had been received into it, would have been impossible; since it is essential to the Doctrine of Predestination, that those who were once elected by God to eternal Salvation could not possibly forfeit his Love and Favour: Neither could those who were once under the Sentence of Reprobation ever possibly attain to eternal Life (*e*). Which clearly demonstrates that these Chapters in the Epistle to the *Romans* have not the least Relation (notwithstanding the Strictness and Severity of some Expressions therein) to the Notion of absolute Election and Reprobation, but to the Point above-mentioned, *viz.* the Admission of the *Gentiles* into the *Christian* Church upon their Faith and Obedience, and the Rejection of the *Jews* for their Perverseness and Unbelief. And if any one should

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(*e*) *Quod ergo Scriptura clare ostendit dicimus, aeterno & immutabili consilio Deum semel constituisse quos olim semel assumere, vellet in salutem, quos rursus exitio devovere. Hoc consilium quoad electos in gratuita Ejus misericordia fundatum esse asserimus, nullo humanæ dignitatis respectu; quos vero damnationi addidit, his justo quidem & irreprehensibili, sed incomprehensibili ipsius Judicio vitæ aditum præcludi.* Calvin. Institut. lib. iii. cap. xxi. §. 7. Of which Judgment of the *Calvinists*, *Oliver Cromwell*, that Monster of Hypocrisy and Wickedness, is a very clear Example: When he was dying, his Chaplains and the Divines that attended him, instead of earnestly exhorting him to the most bitter Repentance for his flagitious Crimes, buoyed up him and themselves with Assurances of his Recovery, as all our best Historians attest. See particularly *Echard*, vol. II. pag. 824, 825. And his Chaplain *Goodwyn* declared to him, that the *Elect* would never fall into Reprobation. Then, answered *Oliver*, *I am safe, for I am sure I was once in a State of Grace.* Dr. *Smollet's History of England*, 8vo, vol. VII. p. 445.

think that what St. *Paul* pronounces of himself, in *chap. ix. ver. 3*, is a sufficient Proof of this Matter; since surely if the Apostle's Argument in these Chapters had no further Concern than the Exclusion of the *Jews* from the *Christian* Church, into which they might yet be received again upon their Repentance and Faith, he would never upon this Account have wished himself accursed from *Christ* for the Sake of his Brethren, his Kinsmen in the Flesh: I answer, that the Rejection of the *Jews* from the *Christian* Church is no such slight and indifferent a Matter, as some Persons may imagine it to be, since, as shall be seen hereafter, Communion with the *Christian* Church is the ordinary covenanted Means of Salvation. And therefore the Apostle might with great Reason be deeply concerned for the extreme Hardness and Obduracy of the *Jews* in rejecting the Terms of their future Happiness, tho' there was a Possibility of being re-admitted to them upon a true Repentance.

But without troubling the Reader with the different Interpretations of the original Word *Anathema*, here rendered *accursed*, for which he may consult the Commentators upon the Place; the Words here used by St. *Paul*, when taken in the strictest Sense, do not imply that he would wish to be eternally condemned for the Sake of his Brethren the *Jews*; but the Expression is hyperbolical, and signifies only that his Love and Concern for them was so very extraordinary, that, if it had been proper and reasonable to do so, he could willingly have chosen to have parted with all his Share and Interest in *Christ*, rather than they should finally miscarry and come short of eternal Salvation; as the antient Writers of the Church, and many learned Moderns, have well observed (*f*). Tho' I humbly conceive that there is no Necessity of having recourse to any such harsh Interpretation; but that the Wish of St. *Paul* in

(*f*) See *Whitby* in loc.

(*g*)
(*b*)
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in this Place may extend no further than to a temporal Death, ἀπὸ Χριστοῦ, *after Christ, i. e. as Christ had suffered before him*; in which Sense it is understood by a very great Critic (g): And he justifies this Sense of the Words from the like manner of Expression in 2 Tim. i. 3, where the Apostle says, *I thank God whom I serve, ἀπὸ πατέρων, from my Forefathers*, as it is crudely expressed in our Translation: It should have been rendered *after the Example of my Forefathers*, as that learned Author and other good Critics have remarked (h). But,

Secondly, The other Particular upon which this Notion of Election and Reprobation is grounded, is that Account which our Saviour Himself gives of the false Christs and false Prophets that should arise after Him, viz. that they should shew such Signs and Wonders, that if it were possible they should deceive even the very *Elect*. Matt. xxiv. 24. Mark xiii. 22. In Answer to which we need only observe these two Things: *First*, That the Word *impossible* in the Holy Scriptures frequently signifies no more than a *great Difficulty*, as I have noted above (i); and the Words εἰ δυνατόν, *if it were possible*, here used by our Saviour, are often found in Scripture to intend the same. Thus St. Paul tells us that he *hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost*, Acts xx. 16. But surely, as a learned Divine (k) observes, he would not have made all this Haste to do what was *impossible*. Again, the same Apostle requires the Romans that, *if it were possible, they should live peaceably with all Men*, chap. xii. 18; which would have been a very ridiculous Exhortation, if it had been *impossible*

(g) Dr. Waterland's Sermons, vol. I. p. 77, 78.

(h) Ἀπὸ πατέρων, i. e. Majorum meorum vestigia secutus, nempe Abrahami, Isaaci, & Jacobi; & aliorum deinceps, a quibus ortus sum, &c. Beza in 2 Tim i. 3. Juxta majorum meorum fidem & institutionem. Vatabl. in loc.

(i) See pag. 4.

(k) Whitby in loc.

possible for them to have avoided Strifes and Contentions: And to these Instances many more might be added, if it were necessary. And nothing more exposes the Ignorance of any Writers, than to build Notions of Divinity on any single Expression, or particular Phrase in Holy Scripture, as it is used in our vulgar Language, when it is contrary to the same manner of Expression in several other Places of the same Scripture. But we need not depend upon the Strength of Criticism in refuting the Notion we are now considering: For what our Lord observes in different Places in both these Chapters will be sufficient to expose the Weakness and Absurdity thereof. For He earnestly cautions His Disciples, that no Man should deceive them, *Matt.* xxiv. 4. He exhorts them to *watch and pray*, lest the Hour of Temptation should find them sleeping, *Mark* xiii. 33, &c. And in the parallel Place in *St. Luke* to take heed, lest their Hearts should be overtaken with *Surfeiting and Drunkenness*, and *that Day should come upon them unawares*, chap. xxi. 34, &c. All which Exhortations would be in the highest Degree absurd and impertinent, if our Blessed Saviour knew, that upon some of them Temptations could not possibly prevail, and that the rest must necessarily be overcome and subdued by them. And then by the *Elect* in this Place are to be understood not such Persons, who are predestinated to Salvation, as that Term is now vulgarly used, but all Christians called to the Belief and Profession of the Holy Gospel; and that in Contradistinction to Heathens and Infidels. In which Sense the Word is used in other Parts of the *New Testament*, as in *Matt.* xx. 16. *Luke* xviii. 7. *1 Pet.* ii. 9. And the Expression manifestly alludes to those Places in the *Old Testament*, where the *Jews* were said to be God's chosen and peculiar People, whom He had taken into Covenant with Himself, under His immediate Care and Protection. See *Deut.* iv. 37. vii. 6. *1 Chron.* xvi. 13. *Psal.* xxxiii. 12. cv. 6, 43. And, which is very remarkable in this Case, the antient *Israelites* were termed the

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the *elect* or *chosen* People of God, notwithstanding that many of them were uncircumcised in their Heart, and went astray from His Commandments; as is evident from many Passages of Holy Scripture, and particularly from *Deut. x. 15, 16*, where *Moses* tells the *Jews*, that *the Lord had a Delight in their Fathers to love them, that He chose their Seed after them, even them above all People, as (saith he) it is this Day; and then of this elect People it is added immediately, circum-* *cise therefore the Foreskin of your Hearts, and be no more stiff-necked.* And in this Sense the Word *elect* is used by the antient Fathers, and particularly by *St. Clement* and *Ignatius* in their Epistles. And it is very worthy of our Notice what the Author of *St. Polycarp's* Martyrdom observes upon this Occasion. For after he had related, that, upon the Executioner's striking his Dagger into his Body, there issued out such a Quantity of Blood, as even extinguished the Fire, he presently sub-joins, that this raised an Admiration in all the People to consider what a Difference there was between the Heathens and the Christians. In the Original it is, *μεταξὺ τῶν ἀπίστων καὶ ἐκλεκτῶν; i. e. between the Infidels and the Elect.* And it will be to no Purpose here to argue, that, the Gentiles hearing the Word of the Lord from *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* at *Antioch* in *Pisidia*, *St. Luke* observes, that *as many as were ordained to eternal Life, believed, Acts xiii. 48.* For by this Expression is not signified, that such Persons were *elect*ed to eternal Salvation, as some have ignorantly imagined, but that those who were *well prepared* (1), or *disposed*,

(1) The original Word *τεταγμένοι* here translated *ordained*, and that in the passive Voice, may be rendered actively, as the passive Voice is frequently used for the Active in Scripture and other Writings. Thus, in *Jam. iv. 10. 1 Pet. v. 6*, it is rightly expressed in our Version actively, *humble yourselves*, tho' the Original is in the Passive, *ταπεινωθήτε*. And the Greek Word *τατίζειν* does no where signify to *predestinate*, as learned Critics have well observed; but to *constitute, prepare, set in Order, and dispose*

disposed, for eternal Life, by the good Tempers and Inclinations of their Minds, believed: And they are set in Opposition to the *Jews*, who in the forty-fifth Verse of the Chapter were *filled with Envy, and spake against those Things which were spoken by St. Paul, contradicting and blaspheming*. For otherwise it would have been to no Purpose for St. Paul to have preached to the *Jews* Remission of Sins, and so earnestly to have exhorted them to Repentance and Obedience to the Gospel, if they could not possibly repent and believe, as not being before *ordained* or *elected* by God to eternal Life (m). Or, as some very great Critics have remarked, the Words may very properly be thus rendered, *as many as were well disposed believed to eternal Life*. For thus Persons are said in Scripture to believe in *Christ* to eternal Life, 1 *Tim.* i. 16; or, which is exactly of the same Import, to *believe to the Saving of the Soul*, *Heb.* x. 39. Neither will it avail any thing to this Cause, that our Saviour told the Seventy Disciples, upon their Return to him, that their Names were *written in Heaven*, *Luke* x. 20. For this is no more than a *Jewish* Phrase, and alludes to the Registers which were kept of the *Jewish* Tribes and Families, or in the Cities which were well ordered (n). And the Expression doth not signify the absolute Election of any

dispose Men for any particular Office and Employment: Of which many Instances and Examples may be seen in *Grotius*, *Hammond*, *Wbitby*, and other Critics upon the Place. I shall at present trouble the Reader only with one, which will sufficiently shew the Sense of the Word in the Text we are now upon: Thus, in 1 *Cor.* xvi. 15, it is said of the House of *Stephanas*, that ἐταξεν ἑαυτῷς, *to the Ministry of the Saints*, i. e. to the Relief of poor *Christians* in their Necessity. (*Vid.* *Hammond* on *Luke* viii. 3.) Now I suppose no one will imagine, that the Word ἐταξεν here signifieth that they were *elected*, or *predestinated* to this Ministration, but that they voluntarily addicted themselves, as it is in our Translation: Or that they had *prepared* or *disposed* themselves thereto.

(m) See above, pag. 11. &c.

(n) *Vid.* *Lewth* on *Isaiab* iv. 3. *Hammond* on *Psal.* iv. 3.

any one to eternal Life, but only his present Right to that Inheritance, in Virtue of the Obedience of Faith, as a very learned Interpreter judiciously observes. For, *saith he*, the Apostle declares of all the *Hebrews* to whom he wrote his Epistle, that they were come to the general Assembly of the First-born, who were written in Heaven, *Heb. xii. 23*, and yet in the 25th Verse saith he to them, *see that ye refuse not him that speaketh (ð)*. And that which will fully demonstrate the great Folly and Weakness of building any Notions of Election upon this scriptural Expression, is this Consideration, that the Names of those Persons, which are at present written in the Book of Life, may afterwards be blotted out of it, as is very evident from *Rev. iii. 5*, and *xxii. 19*, when compared together. And God himself declares the same to *Moses*, *whosoever*, saith He, *hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of the Book which I have written*. But now this would be absolutely impossible, if by any Persons Names being written in Heaven were signified their final and decretory Election to eternal Salvation.

And thus much I thought necessary to observe upon this *Calvinistical* Point of Election; since it is the only Ground, upon which can be rationally built the Confidence of those, who pretend to an Assurance of their everlasting Happiness: I shall only, before I proceed any further, add a Word or two by way of friendly Advice to those who are elevated with this fond Conceit of themselves, *viz.* That since, as was before observed, it is too apt to make Men careless in the necessary Duties of Religion, many of the most learned of the *Calvinistical* Writers have as earnestly contended for the Necessity of a Holy Life and Conversation, as any of those Persons can possibly do, who are of opposite Sentiments to themselves. It would be easy to produce many Testimonies to this Purpose; but I

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shall only at this Time lay before you the Judgment of a learned Writer of this Nation, who was as strict a *Predestinarian* as ever lived: ' The Expectation and Hope (*saitb* be) of any Man for Life, and Immortality, and Glory, without previous Holiness, can be built on no other Foundation but this, that God will rescind his eternal Decrees, and change his Purposes, merely to comply with them in their Sins: And who knows not what will be the End of such a cursed Hope and Expectation (*p*)?' And therefore, how confident soever you may be of your own Salvation, yet let me intreat you to strive to the utmost to be as truly pious towards God, and charitable to your Neighbours, and as humble in your own Thoughts and Opinions, as the best Members of our Church think themselves obliged to be, who pretend to no such Assurance; but content themselves with a reasonable and well-grounded Hope of eternal Life, through the infinite Mercies of God in His Son *Christ Jesus*, and this in Consequence of their sincere Endeavours to please God, tho' accompanied with innumerable Infirmities and Failings. But,

Thirdly, Another Error, to which many of you are subject, consists in placing your Religion (at least a considerable Part of it) in denying yourselves the Riches of this World, and renouncing the lawful Pleasures of it; and in accustoming yourselves to such Rigours and Austerities, as are in no wise commanded in God's Word (*q*). And there are very strange and unaccountable Things which some of your Teachers have advanced upon this Head; and which are so far from being of any Consequence and Service to Religion, that they rather tend to make it ridiculous to any Persons of common Sense and Understanding (*r*). But this Notion

(*p*) Dr. Owen's *Pneumatologia*, p. 521.

(*q*) Vid. Law's *Christian Perfection*, chap. iii, &c.

(*r*) Vid. *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compared*, Part I. p. 31. Part III. p. 304, &c.

Notion not only lays a manifest Prejudice and Impediment in the Way of the *Christian* Profession, and would be a very great Discouragement to many Persons from embracing the Gospel; but it must needs be of the most mischievous Effect and Influence to your own selves, not only by debarring you of the various Blessings and Comforts of Life, which the beneficent Author of Nature hath ordained and appointed for you, and by exposing yourselves to needless Hardships and Severities, but also by throwing yourselves into the most perplexing Doubts and Suspicions of your future Happiness, whenever you shall fall off from those strict and harsh Measures of living, which you deem to be necessary to the State and Condition of a good *Christian*. For all violent Motions as they are unnatural, so they are not lasting; and, when Men abandon themselves to extreme Sallies and Fervours in Religion, they are apt to cool very soon, and then to fall into the opposite Extreme of Melancholy and Desperation. This some of your new Teachers have experimented in themselves (*s*). And it is much to be feared, that too many of yourselves have been totally subjected thereto (*t*); and therefore it must be a very imprudent thing for any one to enjoin himself such Extravagancies and Austerities, since he will find soon enough upon Trial that the ordinary Terms and Conditions of the Gospel are sufficiently strict, and such as will demand his utmost Care and Diligence.

And it is very worthy of our Notice, upon this Occasion, that when some antient Seducers, whether *Judaizing Christians*, as some think, or *Gnostic Heretics*, as others (*u*), were endeavouring to introduce some unreasonable Austerities and Rigours into the *Christian* Service, as thinking *Christianity* would be too soft and easy an Institution without them, (and, as a most

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(*s*) Vid. *Enthusiasm, &c. compared*, Part I. p. 31.

(*t*) *Idem*, Part III. p. 303, &c.

(*u*) Vid. *Hammond and Whitby on Colos. ii. 20, &c.*

learned Prelate well-remarks, there are scarce any of those who are mentioned as the Authors of great Mischief to the Church, but were remarkable for something of this Nature, affecting these Severities as a Badge of more than ordinary (*w*) Sanctity :) We find St. Paul condemning them under the Character of *Will-worship*, and having only the outward Shew and Pretence, and not the Truth and Reality of Humility and Wisdom in them, *Coloss. ii. 20, &c.* But, because those with whom I am now concerned think they have a great Advantage against us in this Argument, by having the Holy Scriptures plainly on their Side, since our Lord requires us not only to deny ourselves, but also to take up our Cross *daily* and follow Him, *Luke ix. 43*, it will therefore be highly necessary not only for their Satisfaction, but also for our own Direction, to state this Matter clearly, as I hope I have done in the following Discourse; in which I have endeavoured to shew that this and the like Passages of Scripture, and especially that in *Matt. xix. 21*, were, if strictly understood, calculated for the Primitive Times of the Church, when Persecution was the general Lot of good Christians; and when as Men were often called to extraordinary Sufferings, so they should meet with as extraordinary a Reward: And that they cannot hold in the ordinary and settled Condition of the Church, unless God shall expressly require them at our Hands, or the particular Case and Circumstances of the Church should demand them of us. And because this is a matter of the greatest Consequence, and it may perhaps be here enquired by what Rules shall we know when any Precepts of our Saviour or the Apostles bind only in extraordinary Cases, and when they hold and are in full Force with regard to all Christians in all Ages of the Church: In Answer to this, I shall beg leave to lay down two Rules, whereby we may clearly discover this Distinction,

(*w*) Bishop *Stillington*'s Sermons, 8vo. V. II. p. 439-40, vid. loc.

tion, if we will judge of it sincerely and with unbiassed Affections.

The *first* Rule is, That we may be certain that any Precept, delivered in the *New Testament*, must be supposed to hold only in extraordinary Cases, and cannot be obligatory upon all *Christians* in all Ages of the Church, when the literal Sense thereof so applied is inconsistent with common Sense and Reason. For God, by making a Revelation of His Will in the Holy Scriptures, never designed to extinguish that Light and Reason, with which we were endued at our first Creation, but to increase and improve it, and to make Discoveries to us of such Things, which, tho' in themselves of the utmost Importance to us, yet we could never have been able to trace them out by the mere Strength of our natural Reason, as many learned Men have fully demonstrated: Neither could there be a more shrewd and pressing Objection against any Revelation, or the Sense of any Part thereof, than if it could be clearly proved to be contrary to Reason. Whosoever therefore any Proposition in Scripture, when taken in the strict literal Sense, is manifestly repugnant to common Sense and Reason, we may be sure that the literal Sense of such a Proposition cannot be true; but that it must be understood with due and proper Restrictions and Qualifications. The Words of an eloquent Preacher of our Church are very judicious and excellent on this Occasion. 'The Circumstances, *saieth he*, of human Life are infinite, and depend upon a Multitude of Accidents not to be foreseen, and consequently not to be provided against. Hence Laws must run in general Terms, and sometimes the Intent of the Law is best fulfilled by running contrary to the Letter: And therefore Reason and Honesty must guide us to the Fitness of the Thing, and a great Scope must be left to Equity and Discretion (x).' Unless this Rule be admitted, we shall in the Interpretation

(x) Dean Stanhope's Sermon at the Commencement at Cambridge 1697, p. 13. See also p. 12.

pretation of some Texts of Scripture, by taking them in the strict literal Sense, fall into infinite Absurdities and Contradictions. And the Enthusiasts themselves have been so sensible of this, that, notwithstanding their resolute Adherence to the strict literal Interpretation of some Passages in the Scriptures, yet they have found it absolutely necessary to depart from that Interpretation, and to take them in a more qualified Sense, when they have plainly perceived the manifest Absurdity and Danger of their being strictly understood. I will give you a remarkable Instance of this in the *Quakers*: There is no one Principle of Religion for which they have more earnestly contended, than the utter Unlawfulness not only of Revenge, but also of War, and that even of a defensive War, from *Matt. v. 39*, where our Lord requires of his Disciples that they *resist not Evil; but whosoever should smite them on the right Cheek, they should turn to him the other also*. *George Fox*, with twelve more of that Party, in a Declaration, to King *Charles II. A. D. 1660*, avowed such a defensive War to be *unchristian*; which Declaration, with the Testimonies of many others of the *Quakers*, against even a defensive War to save their Throats or Goods from Thieves, Robbers, and Cut-throats, was inserted in the Trial of *G. Keith* and others in *Pennsylvania* (y). And the same Notion hath been warmly espoused by all considerable Persons of this Sect since that Time, and pertinaciously contended for by *Barclay*, their Apologist (z). And yet, when the *Buccaniers* had taken one of the Vessels at Sea belonging to *William Penn* and his Associates in *Pennsylvania*, and they were reduced to a very great Struggle and Difficulty between the Necessity of defending themselves and securing their Property on the one Side, and an Adherence to their Principle on the other; at length,

(y) Vid. *Lefley's Works*, Fol, Vol. II. p. 101.

(z) *Apology*, p. 557, &c.

length, on a serious Consultation upon the Case, they came to a Resolution to oppose Force to Force in Defence of their Property; and by that means they presently retook their Sloop, and made some of the Pirates Prisoners: And so, as an eminent Writer expresses it, ' they soon found *that* Necessity in Government when it was in their own Hands, which they ' could not be convinced of when it was in the Hands ' of others (a)'. But that which was very diverting, or rather, to speak seriously, extremely scandalous in this Transaction, was the artful Distinction made use of by them to salve this Defence of their Substance, and to reconcile it with their Principle: And that was, *that they did not use the carnal Weapon, as Quakers, but as Magistrates*; which, as the learned Author last mentioned justly observes, is the same Salvo which the Pope has for his using the temporal Sword (b). And what Encouragement and Assistance this very Party gave to the Enemies of the King from their first Rise in 1649 to the Restoration (tho' upon that Change of Government they made as remarkable a Change in their Behaviour) may be seen at large in the Writings of the same Person (c), as well as in our Historians. And this plainly shews, as I have just now represented to you, the great Folly and Absurdity of adhering to the strict and literal Sense of some Texts of Scripture, when they, considered in that Light, require such Things of us as are manifestly inconsistent with common Sense and Reason. And there are several other Passages of Scripture, besides that last referred to, which have suffered very much, and produced many fatal and mischievous Effects in the World, by the same kind of Interpretation. I shall at present mention only one by way of Example; and that is in *Luke xii. 33. Sell that ye have, and give alms.* This
Passage

(a) *Lesley's Works*, Fol. Vol. II. p. 101.

(b) *Lesley*, *ibid.*

(c) *Lesley*, *ibid.* p. 101, &c.

Passage with the parallel Text in *Matt. xix. 21, &c.* hath been miserably perverted by some Persons to prove the absolute Unlawfulness of any worldly Estates and Possessions, and the Necessity of introducing a Community of Goods. A learned and serious Writer hath of late laboured this Point with more than ordinary Earnestness and Zeal (*d*). And there is hardly any one Particular which your new Teachers more frequently inculcate upon their Hearers than the Necessity of renouncing the Riches and Power of this World, and discarding all the Ornaments of Life (*e*). But now, not to mention that the last of the Texts here recited is generally thought by the most learned Interpreters to be a particular Command only given to the young Person there concerned, of which more hereafter; and the Notion of the Unlawfulness of worldly Riches and the Ornaments of Quality is directly contrary to many other Places in Holy Scripture, in which, notwithstanding the Community of Goods mentioned in *Acts ii*, Men are left in the free Possession of their Estates, and under the Liberty of enjoying the Things of this World, as I hope I have clearly shewn in the following Discourse: I say, not to mention this, that the Interpretation of *Luke xii. 33*, with its parallel Text, either in *St. Matthew* or *St. Mark*, as implying a Command to all Christians, in all Ages of the Church, in the strict and rigorous Sense of the Letter, to sell their Estates and give them to the Poor, does not only involve in itself a manifest Absurdity, but would also defeat and disappoint the very End and Design for which this Interpretation thereof hath been introduced.

And, *first*, It involves in itself a manifest Absurdity: For if *A*, at present the Possessor of an Estate, is obliged to sell it to *B*, and *B* to *C*, &c. there must be, in this Case, a continual Progression of the Sale of
Estates

(*d*) *Law's Christian Perfection*, chap. iii, iv, &c.

(*e*) *Vid. Enthusiasm, &c. compared*, Part I. p. 20 to 25.

(*)
finere
su picia
nimis
cap. i
legem a
qua pe
sua ten
duce na
rum, ur

Estates, without any Persons being left in the settled Possession of them; and a Man would have no further Concern in the buying of an Estate than to sell it immediately to some other Person who should purchase it of him: Which would be such a trifling and ridiculous Institution, that it would be unworthy of the meanest Lawgiver in the *Pagan World* (*), and surely then very unfit to be promulged by our Blessed Saviour, who was infinite in Wisdom.

And then, in the *second Place*, this levelling Principle would intirely frustrate and destroy the End and Design which is aimed at thereby. For if the Estates of all rich Men were to be sold, and the Money brought into a common Bank and Treasury, so that an equal Division thereof might be made amongst Men; as there are, upon Computation, at least forty poor Persons in the World to one that is rich, the Proportion, which would in this Case fall to every one's Share, would be but small and inconsiderable; since the most costly and valuable Things in Life, such as sumptuous Buildings, stately Furniture, and the splendid Ornaments of Attire, would upon this Scheme find no Purchasers at all: Inasmuch as by the Destruction of superior Quality in the Stations of Mankind there would be no Persons who would have any Use and Occasion for them. And then, when that small Pittance, which would hereby accrue to the Poor from this Distribution, would in a little Time, by the Idleness of some, and the Unthriftiness and Mismanagement of others, be spent and gone, and when in the mean time every one

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(*) *Habenda autem est ratio rei familiaris quam quidem dilabi finire flagitiosum est: sed ita ut illiberalitatis avaritiæque absit supericio. Posse enim liberalitate uti, non spoliante se patrimonio, nimirum is est pecuniæ fructus maximus. Cic. de Offic. lib. ii. cap. 18. Capitalis oratio (Philippi scilicet in Tribunatu, cum legem agrariam ferret, &c.) & ad æquationem bonorum pertinens, qua peste quæ potest esse major? Hanc enim ob causam maxime, ut sua tenerent, respublicæ civitatesque constitutæ sunt: Nam etsi duce natura congregabantur homines, tamen spe custodiæ rerum suarum, urbium præficia quærebant. Idem, ibid. cap. 21.*

must be employed in the Cultivation of his own Share and Property, and by that Means all the ingenious Arts of Life would soon decay and be laid aside, for want of a proper Encouragement from the Rich and Great ; and the Trade and Commerce of the World, upon which the Prosperity and Happiness of Nations in a great Measure depends, and which cannot be carried on in any competent Degree without Power and Riches, would be reduced to a very mean and narrow Compass. I say, when Things should be brought into this miserable Condition, which they would very soon be upon this Hypothesis, such a wretched State of Poverty and Want would presently ensue, as would render the Poor ten times more unhappy and distressed, than they were before under that unequal Dispensation of Providence which then seemed to be so grievous to them ; as there would be no rich Persons to employ them in their proper Works and Labours for the Support of themselves and Families, and the small Portion arising to them from the common Distribution would be soon dissipated and reduced to nothing (f). And if rich Men would be so wise and prudent as to abstain from all Vice and Wickedness, and content themselves with such Instances of Magnificence, either in Buildings and Equipage, or in Ornaments or Apparel, as are in no wise disproportionate to their Quality and Condition, such Management as this would be so far from deserving any Blame and Censure, that, on the contrary, it would really tend to the Benefit and Happiness of any Nation, by a brisker Circulation of Money through every Part of it, and by that means promoting and advancing the Trade and Commerce thereof. And I humbly conceive, that it would be more beneficial to the Poor themselves, by setting them to work, and keeping them from Idleness, than if some considerable Part of the said Expence had been conferred upon them by present

(f) See this Matter very clearly proved in an excellent Discourse by Bishop Conybeare, Vol. I. Sermon 7th, p. 209, &c.

present and immediate Distributions; which, tho' they may sometimes be of great Service to particular Persons, such as the Sick and Aged, or those who are under any pressing Wants and Necessities (in which Cases they ought always to be encouraged) yet we too often find them in fact miserably lavish'd away and mispent by many poor Men (†).

And thus much may I hope be sufficient to shew the Folly and Weakness of those Writers, who expound the two Passages of Scripture abovementioned according to the strict Rigour of the literal Sense, as implying the absolute Necessity of every Man's selling his Estate and giving it to the Poor, or putting the Purchase-Money into one common Bank and Treasury. And therefore when, in St. Luke xii. 33, our Lord requires us to *sell* what we have, and *give Alms*; the Meaning of the Words as they are expressed, according to the Luxuriancy of the Eastern Stile, can be no more than this, that we should be ready at all times to relieve the Poor out of our Abundance, and, as a very learned Prelate of our Church observes, 'upon great and pressing Occasions even to pinch Nature, and straiten ourselves within what upon other Occasions we might allow ourselves (g):' And even to part with our whole Estates to the said Purpose, whenever it shall please God expressly to command us to do so, or the Necessity of the Church should manifestly

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require

(†) *Quamobrem id quidem non dubium est quin illa benignitas quæ constat ex opera & industria, & honestior sit & latius pateat, & possit prodesse pluribus. Nonnunquam tamen est largiendum, nec hoc benignitatis genus omnino repudiandum est: et sæpe idoneis hominibus indigentibus de re familiari impertiendum; sed diligenter atque moderate. Multi enim patrimonia effuderunt inconsulte largiendo. Quid autem est stultius, quam quod libenter facias, curare ut id diutius facere non possis? — Quamobrem nec ita claudenda est res familiaris, ut eam benignitas aperire non possit, nec ita referenda, ut pateat omnibus. Modus adhibeatur, isque referatur ad facultates. Cicer. de Offic. lib. ii. cap. 15.*

(g) Burnet on the XXXIX Articles, p. 392.

require it at our Hands. And the same Interpretation is to be given of the other Text in *Matt. xix. 20*, if it be applied to all Christians in all Ages of the World. But it is generally agreed, and I think with good Reason, by learned Commentators, that the Words in that Verse, and in *Mark x. 21*, are a particular Command only occasionally given to the young Man (*b*), with which other Christians are not concerned any further than as to the general Purport and Intent thereof. And that which I think might reasonably give you some small Prejudice against the strict and rigorous Sense of those Places of Scripture (besides the manifest Absurdity of taking them in that Light) is this Consideration, *viz.* that there have been no Persons more eager and insatiate after the Riches and Power of this World, than many of those who have warmly espoused and countenanced this harsh and severe Interpretation of them: Of which (to say nothing of any Persons among us at present) the *Anabaptists* in Germany, under the Reign of *Charles the Vth*, will be a lasting and memorable Example. These Men earnestly contended for a Community of Goods, and strictly commanded all their Adherents,

(*b*) *Hoc animo estate; ut si Res postulet omnia vendatis ut Christum retineatis.* Maldonat. in loc. *Hebræus mos loquendi.* Grot. *ibid.* *If thou wilt be perfect, i. e. If thou wilt ascend to that higher Pitch to which I come to raise Men upon the Contemplation of the Rewards of Heaven, then must thou, whensoever it is required of thee, either directly, as I now do command thee, sell all that thou hast, and give to the Poor, &c.* Hammond in loc. *If thou wilt be perfect, i. e. fully instructed in the highest Doctrines of my Religion, then go and, now I require it of thee, sell all that thou hast, &c.* Whitby in loc. It does not appear but the young Man might have done well, if he had gone away satisfied with *Christ's* first Answer. So that our Saviour does not seem to have bidden him sell his Estate as a Thing absolutely necessary to his being a good Man, but only as a Thing necessary at that Time to his being a Preacher of the Gospel; and that he might reprove his Confidence; and that he might have an Occasion to represent to his Disciples the great Danger and Mischief of the Love of Riches. Dr. Clarke's *Annotat. in loc.*

Adherents, on pain of Death and at the Peril of their Salvation, to reserve no Property to themselves, but to bring all their Money into one public Bank and Treasury: And they further asserted, that it was unlawful for any *Christians* to bear any Office of Magistracy; and yet these very Men, when they had by these Means gained a great Accession to their Party, and brought their Disciples over to their Measures, made *John of Leyden* their King, whom one of their own Prophets, in the Name of God, declared to be Monarch of the whole World. They openly justified and practised Polygamy, and made such a dreadful Insurrection, and raised so horrible a Rebellion in *Munster*, which, after many Barbarities, Cruelties, and Murthers, was at length with great Difficulty quelled and suppressed (i), as ought to make all Persons extremely cautious how they listen to such Preachers, who endeavour to instil such Fanatical Notions into their Minds. And the best Way to make Trial of the Sincerity of such Preachers would be to desire them to give an undeniable Proof and Example of this Doctrine in their own Persons, by disposing of all their own Effects for the Relief of the Poor, before they require them to pay any due Regard to their Instructions. But,

Secondly, Another Way by which we may discern when any particular Texts of Scripture are not obligatory in the strict and rigorous Sense of the Letter in all Ages of the Church, is, when such Texts, thus severely interpreted, are inconsistent with several other clear and express Passages of Scripture which relate to the same Matter: For it is impossible that the Holy Scripture should contradict itself; and therefore we cannot conclude any thing from any obscure and doubtful Text of Scripture, when it is manifestly repugnant to the plain and evident Sense of other Places which concern the same Points. Thus for Instance, when the *Quakers* would infer from *Matt. v. 39*, that all War is unlawful, this cannot by
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(i) Vid. *Sleidan. Commentar. lib. x. in principio.*

any means be the Sense of this Text, not only because this Notion is absolutely inconsistent with common Sense and Reason, and with the Safety of private Persons and public Kingdoms by the Acknowledgment of the *Quakers* themselves, as was before observed (k); but also because it is directly repugnant to other plain and clear Places of Holy Scripture. Thus, when, among other Persons who came to *John the Baptist* to be baptized of him, the Soldiers came and demanded of him what they must do? The Answer he gave them was, that they should *do Violence to no Man*, nor *accuse any falsely*, and *be content with their Wages*. Luk. iii. 14. Now, if the military Profession had been unlawful, the *Baptist's* Answer would have been insufficient. It would have been his bounden Duty (and the Sincerity of that honest Preacher would not have suffered him to have been wanting therein) to have told them plainly and clearly, that the Life of a Soldier was absolutely sinful, and that they must intirely quit and depart from it, if they expected to be admitted into the Kingdom of God. St. *Luke* calls *Cornelius* the Centurion *a devout Man, and one that feared God*, Acts x. 2; which Character he would never have given to him, if his very Profession had been directly contrary to the Commands of *Christ*. And St. *Paul* takes notice of the same kind of Men without passing the least Reflection on their Function, 2 *Tim.* ii. 4. To give only one Instance more of this Matter: Thus, when our Blessed Saviour exhorts us to distribute our Charity from a true and sincere Principle, without any Vanity and Ostentation, He delivers Himself in very general Terms; *Let not your Left-hand know what your Right-hand doeth*, Matt. vi. 3. But this cannot be a certain Rule whereby our Charity is to be directed in all Cases: For then all public Charities, which are most considerable for the Honour of God and Religion, would be forbidden by the

(k) See above, pag. 30.

the Gospel, as a most learned Bishop of our Church hath well remarked (1). And in this View of that Text the Words would be utterly irreconcilable with what our Lord requires of us in the same divine Sermon, viz. *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven*, Matt. v. 16. For at this Rate we should be restrained by our Saviour from setting an Example of that Virtue, which is the greatest and most excellent Part of our holy Religion. Our Saviour's Meaning therefore in this Place is plainly this, That, when we bestow our Alms on our poor Brethren, we should be particularly careful that we do not perform this Duty out of Vanity or Ostentation, but from a true and genuine Principle of the Love of God; but not that we should never do an Act of Charity even to a particular Person in the Sight of Men: For it is one Thing to do our Works of Charity *in the Sight of Men*, and quite another Thing to do them on purpose *that Men may see them*.

Many other Instances might be added, if it were necessary; but these may be sufficient to shew the extreme Folly and Danger of interpreting these and the like Passages of Scripture in the strict and rigorous Sense of the Letter, when they are, considered in that View, not only repugnant to many other clear and express Texts in the Word of God, but also manifestly inconsistent with common Sense and Reason. And the learned Writer himself, who, as I reminded you before, hath most strenuously laboured this Point of the Necessity of Mens parting with their Estates from the Texts abovementioned, hath, at last, thought it expedient to soften the Matter a little, by saying, ' that it ' is not necessary that a Man should sell all that he ' hath, because that was the Expression used to the ' young Man, but it is necessary that he should com-
' ply

(1) *Stillingsfleet's Sermons*, Vol. II. pag. 404.

ply with the Thing signified; and he sufficiently selleth all, who gives away his Estate, and who parts with the Self-enjoyment of it, and maketh it the Support of those that want it (*m*). But this, as an eminent Preacher of our Church expresses it, is a wonderful Way of explaining one's self (*n*). And it does in no wise extenuate the Difficulty of the harsh Interpretation of the Text we are now upon; since it would be all one in effect for a Man to part with his Estate intirely, as to keep it in his Hands without having any Enjoyment thereof. And in this Light what Sense could we make of those many Places in Holy Scripture, where Riches are said to be the Gift and Blessing of God to good Men. I will recite only one or two for Example sake: Thus saith the *Wise Man*, *Honour the Lord with thy Substance, &c. so shall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Presses burst out with new Wine*, Prov. iii. 9, 10. So likewise saith the *Psalmist*, *Blessed is the Man that feareth the Lord, &c. Wealth and Riches shall be in his House*, Psal. cxii. 1, 3. i. e. says an excellent Paraphrast, his Estate shall not only be rich and plentiful, but so firmly settled and entailed on his Posterity, that they shall reap the perpetual Fruit of his Justice and Charity (*o*). To which I will only add that remarkable Saying of St. Paul, that God *giveth us richly all Things to enjoy*, 1 Tim. vi. 17 (*p*). Which would be a very odd kind of Expression, if, according to our modern Instructors, we were not allowed to have any Enjoyment of them.

And thus I have gone through all that I proposed to offer to your Consideration, with regard to some fatal Errors and Mistakes into which I humbly think you are unhappily fallen; and I have dwelt longer upon them

(*m*) Law's *Christian Perfection*, pag. 115.

(*n*) Dr. Trapp's Four Discourses on *being righteous overmuch*, pag. 23.

(*o*) Bishop Patrick in *loc*.

(*p*) Vid. Hammond's *Annotat. in loc*.

them than I thought I should have done, in order to give you the fuller and more compleat Satisfaction. All that I would now desire of you is, that you would take the Arguments here proposed to you into your serious Consideration, and judge of them with the same Candour and Friendship with which they are tendered unto you. Quit yourselves like Men, and be not hurried away with Noise and Clamour; but exercise that Reason and Understanding with which God hath endued you. And, as the Apostle advises, be not like *Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, and cunning Craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Eph. iv. 14. Consider that many of you are Members of the best and most excellent Church in the World, as many learned Men have clearly demonstrated; and to the Excellency of whose Communion many of its professed Adversaries have given particular Attestation (q). So long then as you continue in the Communion of this Church, and live up to the holy Precepts and Instructions therein delivered, you will be safe; and if there be any thing in the Doctrine thereof which administers any Doubts and Uneasiness to your Minds, let me intreat you to have Recourse to your proper Pastors, who will, doubtless, if you will hearken to Reason, and abide by the clear and undeniable Principles of Holy Scripture, give you full and intire Satisfaction about it. And do not by any means forsake those Pastors, and give up yourselves to the Direction of such Guides as have nothing to recommend them above the others, but vain and idle Pretences to Inspiration, and intimate Conversations with God, and such immediate and powerful Effects of their Preaching, as have caused in some of their Hearers the most dreadful Shriekings and Groanings, and terrible Convulsions and Agitations, and have thrown others down to the Ground, where they lay for some Time as if they were dead, 'till they were recovered

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(q) *Vid.* Bishop Stillingfleet's Sermons, Vol. II. p. 325, &c.

vered by their Prayers and Assistance (r). To which Enthusiastic Extravagancies if the Divines of our Church had pretended, they would have been abhorred by all sober and serious Christians, and deservedly the Objects of your own Scorn and Derision.

Consider that the worst and vilest Heretics among the Antients, and the most Fanatical and Enthusiastical Persons among the Moderns, have ever laid Claim to such extraordinary Revelations and Communications with God, who nevertheless did wallow and abound in all Manner of Uncleannefs and Impurity: As hath been fully shewn by *Irenæus* and *Epiphanius* of old, and of late by many learned Writers (s). And therefore, whensoever we find Men arrogating to themselves such extraordinary Illuminations, we should always be very jealous of them, lest, notwithstanding their Appearance in *Sheeps Cloathing*, they should in the End prove to be nothing else but *seducing Spirits*, and *grievous Wolves, not sparing the Flock*, 1 Tim. iv. 1. Acts xx. 29. And we should not give the least Heed to their Pretensions, till they can make them good by working real and undoubted Miracles, as the Apostles and primitive Christians did in Testimony of their Commission. For otherwise, if you will not endure sound Doctrine (and such as I am confident, if it is not preached in the Church of *England*, it is no-where preached in the Christian World) but will *heap to yourselves Teachers, having itching Ears*, 2 Tim. iv. 3. If you will not *try the Spirits whether they be of God*, but will believe every Spirit that comes to you with extravagant Pretensions to spiritual Gifts and Illuminations, you will soon find that *many false Prophets are gone out into*

(r) Vid. *Enthusiasm, &c. compar'd*, Part III. p. 23, &c. 32, &c. 303, &c.

(s) Vid. Dr. *Cave's Primitive Christianity*, Part II. chap. 5. Part III chap. 1. *Stillingfleet* on the Idolatry of the Church of Rome, chap. 4. *Downes's Methodism examin'd*, passim. *Enthusiasm, &c. compar'd*, Part I. p. 6, &c.

into the World, 1 John iv. 1, who, it is much to be feared, will deceive you to your own Ruin.

I am sensible that that which prejudices you so much against a constant Communion with your proper Pastors is the Representation which is given to you by your New Teachers of the Church Party, and indeed of all who do not follow their Guidance and Direction, viz. That they are a carnal and wicked Generation, void of all Piety and Goodness, and intirely devoted to the Riches and Pleasures of this World (*t*); and therefore there is a Necessity you should avoid them as much as you can, lest their *evil Communication* should corrupt your good Manners, 1 Cor. xv. 33. And particularly the Clergy of our Church are stigmatized by some of your New Teachers under the vilest Characters, such as for Decency-sake I do not chuse to repeat (*u*). And a late confident Writer of the Party hath reproached them as Hypocrites and Deceivers, who have intirely renounced and disclaimed many of those Articles of the Church to which they have given their solemn Subscriptions (*w*). And is this all the Return that is made to (I will be bold to say) the wisest and most learned Body of Clergy that is to be found in the whole *Christian* World, for the many and great Services which they have done to this Nation in several Respects? One would rather have thought (as I formerly observed upon another Occasion (*x*), that the many noble Foundations of Piety and Charity which have been established by the *English* Clergy, the innumerable and excellent Books which they have published in all Parts of useful Learning, as well Classica and Historical, Philosophical and Mathematical, as in Theology and Morality; the restless and unwearied Endeavours of many of them for the Good

(*t*) *Enthusiasm, &c. compar'd*, Part. I. p. 17. Part. I. p. 117.

(*u*) *Vid. Enthusiasm, &c.* Part I. p. 15. Part II. p. 125.

(*w*) *Methodism display'd* throughout.

(*x*) Discourse on the Lord's Day, I. 329, 330.

of Souls; and particularly the brave and generous *Stand* which they made by their immortal Writings, and invincible Courage and Patience, in a late *Critical Juncture*, when our Religion, Laws, and Liberties were in the most extreme Danger, should be most gratefully remembered by all the People of this Land, and forever endear and recommend that Sacred Order to the Love and Esteem, the Honour and Veneration of all true Protestants and *Englishmen*.

But to return to the Objections against the Members of our Church, and the Ministers thereof.

To the *first* Part of the Objection I answer, that the Nation in general is very wicked, and the Lives of too many Christians are very unsuitable to their holy Profession. But then we desire to know when the Condition of the Christian World was otherwise, the three first Ages of the Church excepted? And our Saviour hath by the Parable of the Tares among the Wheat let us know, that we must expect a Mixture of bad and good Men in the Church 'till the Day of Judgment, *Matt. xiii. 24, &c.* And yet, as bad as the Nation is, there are, God be praised, in every Parish therein several truly pious and devout Persons of all Ranks and Degrees, who are an Honour and Credit to our Religion.

But yet, supposing the Case was otherwise, this is no just Reason why any of you should leave the Communion of your proper Pastors in the Church; since, if you live in a very wicked World, it is your Duty to stem the Torrent of such Wickedness, and to endeavour to bring about a general Reformation, by your pious Instructions and good Examples, as our Blessed Saviour and the Apostles did. And thus our Lord advises and directs in this Case, *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven, Matt. v. 16.* And, as the Apostle observed to the *Philippians*, you should be *blameless and harmless, the Sons of God, without Rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse Nation,*
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among whom you should shine as Lights in the World, Chap. ii. 15. And if some of you have been amended in your Morals since your Attachment to your New Teachers, (which may perhaps be the Case, inasmuch as the Effects of Enthusiasm are often strong and powerful, tho' seldom very lasting) we are so far from envying your Perfection, that we very much rejoice thereat. But we would earnestly advise you to be fully assured of the Reality of your Attainments, since there is a manifest Difference between true sincere Gospel Piety, which manifests itself in all the Graces and Virtues of a good Life, and a *Pharisaical* Pride and Presumption, grounded upon a high Conceit and Imagination of one's own Qualifications and Perfections. And, what Opinion soever you may have of your own Endowments, yet let me earnestly persuade you to beware of censuring and damning those who do not join themselves to your Sect and Party, as too many Persons among you are apt to do (y); since among the genuine Fruits of the Spirit enumerated by St. Paul in *Galat. v. 22, &c.* the very first of them all is That of *Love* or *Charity*; and what are the Effects of this Charity, and how necessary it is to eternal Salvation, the Apostle shews at large in *1 Cor. chap. xiii.* which I beg you will read and consider at your Leisure. And then,

Secondly, As to the Reflections cast upon us by your New Instructors, we will not by any means recriminate in this Case; for that is a low and paltry Instance of Self-Defence, and it would be very imprudent and dangerous to do it at this Time; for surely such great Sinners as we are accounted to be, and which, after the Example of the Blessed Apostle St. Paul, we are ready to acknowledge ourselves to be, *1 Tim. i. 15*, are never to be drawn into a Comparison with such Eminent Saints, who are so much favoured by God and *Christ* as to have an intimate Union and Communion with them.

(y) Vid. *Enthusiasm, &c. compar'd*, Part II. p. 117.

them. And indeed, if they were Persons of such extraordinary Piety and Accomplishments as they would seem to be, they would never have enticed you from the Communion of the Church, and the Ministration of your legal Pastors, under the Pretence of greater Illuminations and Perfections; neither would they have instructed their Followers in fantastical Notions of the *New Birth* and *Election*, and the *Assurance of Salvation*, which, as hath been clearly shewn in the present Discourse, have not the least Foundation in the Word of God. But they would have informed their Hearers of the indispensable Duty of Obedience to their appointed Pastors, so long as their Instructions were agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, which the Apostle plainly requires of them in *Hebr. xiii. 17*; and they would have joined their Endeavours and Labours with them, in preaching the Essential Doctrines of the Gospel, and the important Duties of Faith, Repentance, and Obedience. And if they had acted in this Manner, they would have found all possible Respect from all our Clergy; and their Churches would at all Times have been open to them, and we should have returned them our most hearty Thanks for their Labour of Love, and assisting us in promoting the eternal Happiness and Salvation of the People committed to our Charge. And thus our Blessed Saviour, who was infinite in Wisdom, conducted Himself in this Case: When he came into the World, the *Jewish* Church was sunk and degenerated into the very lowest Degree of Corruption, and the Pastors thereof were become brutish, *Jer. x. 21*. And I hope this is far from being the Condition of the Establish'd Church at present, in every Part of which there are doubtless many burning and shining Lights. And yet our Blessed Lord did not for that Reason draw away the *Jews* from their Subjection to their appointed Pastors, nor endeavour to form them into separate Parties and Factions, but he constantly communicated with the *Jewish* Church in all its Offices and Administrations; and expressly told the People that the *Scribes and Pharisees* sat
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in Moses's Seat: All therefore (saith he) that they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do ye not after their Works, for they say and do not. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3. And last of all, with regard to that Part of the Objection made to our Clergy for their Insincerity in subscribing to the Articles of the Church: We reply, that the Person who hath laid this to our Charge is too rash and hasty in his Censure. All the Ground of this Calumny, which is here so severely pointed against us, is, that we do not assent to the Articles concerning Original Sin, Predestination, &c. in that strict *Calvinistical* Sense in which, as he imagines, they were compiled. And we freely own that we do not; and yet we are fully persuaded, that we subscribe them with great Sincerity. For, as the most learned Expositor of them hath judiciously observed, though there is no doubt but that they who drew up those Articles did themselves go strictly into the Notions of *Calvinism*; yet they were Persons of that Temper and Moderation, that they framed them under such a Latitude of Expression, that Men might honestly subscribe them, tho' they had not such rigid and severe Thoughts and Conceptions of these Points of Doctrine as themselves (z). And I humbly think that the Church of *England* is very much obliged to this great Prelate for setting this Matter in so strong and clear a Light as he hath done. And our anonymous Author might have spared this outrageous Censure of a pious and learned Body of Clergy, 'till he could have fully answered the Arguments alledged by this illustrious Bishop, which I am confident he will never be able to do.

And now I must renew my Exhortation to you to consider seriously what I have here laid before you, and to compare the Arguments which I have now advanc'd with the clear and plain Declarations of God's Word. And, if you will do this heartily and sincerely, I am
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(z) *Burnet* on the XXXIX Articles, p. 8, 116, 168.

in great Hopes you will be thoroughly convinced, that your Notions of the *New Birth*, *Election* and the *Assurance of Salvation*, with the other Points which I have now examined, have not the least Support and Countenance from the Holy Scriptures. And if this friendly Address of mine shall have so much Effect upon any one or more of you, as to convince you of those Errors to which you are now exposed, or be the Means of preventing any other Members of the Church from falling into them; I shall think my Time and Pains well bestowed. But if they should fail of this good Effect, and you should still resolutely adhere to your Notions which I have now animadverted upon; in this Case I earnestly intreat you, that, notwithstanding your Sentiments in these Particulars, you would constantly communicate with the established Church, and stick close to those Persons to whose Care the Providence of God hath committed you: And then, if you constantly communicate with the Church, and observe all the holy Rules and Precepts of it, in a due Submission to your proper Pastors, your Notions in the Points before mentioned, how ill grounded soever, may not be of any Prejudice to your Salvation. For the most rigid *Calvinists*, tho' they thought that no one could possibly be saved that was not within the Decree of Election, as was before remarked (a), yet they were as earnest in persuading all Sinners to repent, and to live in the Practice of Holiness and Virtue, as if they had not maintained any such Doctrine at all. And they agreed that there could be no surer Sign that any Man was elected to Salvation than his believing the Gospel, and living in Obedience to the holy Rules and Precepts of it. And tho' at present you do often communicate with the established Church, and receive the Holy Sacrament therein, yet there will be great Danger in following these New Guides, since in virtue of their pre-

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(a) See above, p. 19.

tended Gifts, and extraordinary Endowments, you will in all Probability be at length finally drawn away from the Church into separate Communions: For the Motions of Enthusiasm as they are very violent, so they are apt to exceed all Bounds and Limits in their Effects and Operations. And if this should happen, you will by forsaking the Church and the Communion of your own Pastors, not only act in direct Contradiction to the Commands of God, *Hebr. xiii. 17*, but by constantly adhering to the Ministration of those who thus entice you from the Communion of the Church, and claim a Jurisdiction independent on their proper Bishops (*b*), you will incur the Guilt of the great and dangerous Sin of Schism (*c*), tho' the Persons to whom you adjoin yourselves should contend for the Articles of the Church, and make use of its publick Service and Liturgy, notwithstanding what one of your late Writers hath suggested to the contrary (*d*). And how great a Sin it will be to make a causeless Separation from the true Church of Christ, St. Paul clearly shews in many of his Epistles. Thus saith he to the *Corinthians*, *I beseech you Brethren by the Bowels of our Lord Jesus Christ, that there be no Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same Mind, and in the same Judgment*, 1 Cor. i. 10. And again he earnestly exhorts the *Ephesians*, that they should endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, chap. iv. 3; for which he gives a very good Reason in another Place, viz. that by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, i. e. the Church, 1 Cor. xii. 13. Our Blessed Saviour assures us, that as the Branch cannot bear Fruit of itself except it abide in the Vine, no

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(*b*) Vid. *Enthusiasm, &c. compar'd*, Part. II. p. 124 to 127.

(*c*) *Ecclesiæ salus in summi sacerdotis dignitate pendet cui si non exors quædam & ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in Ecclesiâ efficiuntur schismata, quot sacerdotes*. Hieronym. ad Luciferianos.

(*d*) *Methodism display'd*, p. 29. Vid. *Dedwell's Separation of Churches*, chap. x.

more can we, except we abide in Him. *John xv. 4.* And in what Manner all true *Christians* are united to *Christ* St. *Paul* shews us very plainly in his Epistle to the *Ephe- sians*, where, speaking of the Honour and Glory to which *Christ* was advanced by God the Father, he tells us, that God hath given Him to be the Head over all Things to the Church, which is His Body, chap. i. 22, 23, and he observes the same Thing in chap. iv. 15, 16, and makes that an Argument that we should not be carried away with every Wind of Doctrine, by the Sleight of Men, ver. 14. and be thereby deceived into a Separation from the Church. And how a Man can be united to *Christ* the Head of the Church without an Union with that Body of which He is the Head, is past my Understanding and Comprehension. And there is not any one Particular in which the antient Fathers of the Church are more agreed than in condemning a needless Separation from the true Church of *Christ* in Subordination to its proper Bishops. This may be seen very evidently in many Parts of St. *Ignatius's* Epistles. And when some Persons under the Umbrage of their Spiritual Gifts (e) had made an unhappy Division in the Church of *Corinth*, we may see how mightily St. *Clement* (whom St. *Paul* calls his Fellow-Labourer, and whose Name was in the Book of Life, *Phil. iv. 3.*) bewails this Misfortune, and how earnestly he exhorts them to Unity and Peace (f); and, as a most learned Author judiciously observes, he did not think that their being endued with extraordinary Gifts could give them any Privilege of Exemption from the Authority of their Spiritual Governors (g). When Persons have an immediate Authority from God to make any particular
Revelation

(e) Cum occasione hominum quorundam qui donis spiritus extraordinariis insigniti adversus Ecclesiae Rectores insurgabant, gravi schismate laboraret Ecclesia Corinthiaca, &c. Cave, Histor. Liter. Vol. I. p. 18.

(f) Clem. 1 Ep. ad Corinth.

(g) Dodwell's Separation of Churches, &c. chap. 19. p. 446.

Revelation of His Will, and can attest their Commis-
 sion by undoubted Miracles, there is no Doubt but
 that they have a Right, nay and that it is their bounden
 Duty to publish such a Revelation in Opposition to all
 the Powers of this World, both Ecclesiastical and Civil.
 In this Case the Scripture Rule is, that *we ought to obey
 God rather than Men.* Acts v. 29. But the being en-
 dued with uncommon Gifts of the Spirit was never
 thought to be a sufficient Excuse for any Person's making
 a Separation from the Church of *Christ*, and much
 less for setting himself up in Opposition to the Governors
 thereof. And accordingly we find St. *Clement* warm-
 ly addressing himself to these spiritually gifted Persons,
 and representing to them the great Sin and Danger of
 making such Divisions: For thus saith he to them,
 " It would be better for you to be found *little, but of*
 " *good Reputation*, in the Sheepfold of *Christ*, than to

" seem to yourselves superior to others, and be cast out
 " of His Hope or Fold (*b*)" *Irenæus* expressly de-
 clares that they who do not communicate with the
 Church are not Partakers of God's Spirit, but deprive
 themselves of Life, for where the Church is, there is
 the Spirit of God (*i*). St. *Cyprian* saith, that *he who*
hath not the Church for his Mother cannot have God for
his Father (*k*). And the Words of St. *Austin* are very
 severe upon this Occasion: " Whosoever, saith he,
 " shall separate himself from the Catholic Church,
 " how commendably soever he may imagine himself
 " to behave in other Respects, yet on the Account of
 " this one Wickedness, that he is disjoined from the

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" Unity

(*b*) Ἀμεινον ὑμῖν ἔστιν ἐν τῷ ποιμένει τῆς Χριστοῦ μικρὰς καὶ
 ἐλλογιμὰς εὐεθῆναι, ἢ καὶ ὑπεροχὴν δοῦντας ἐκκεῖναι ἐκ
 τῆς ἐλπίδος αὐτῶν Clem. Ep. ad Corinth. 5. 57.

(*i*) Cujus, & seq. Spiritus non sunt participes qui non concur-
 runt ad Ecclesiam, sed semet ipsos fraudant a vita. Ubi enim Ec-
 clesia, ibi est Spiritus Dei. Irenæus, lib. iii. cap. 40.

(*k*) Habere jam non potest Deum Patrem, qui Ecclesiam non
 habet Matrem. Cyp. de Unitat. Ecclesiæ.

" Unity of *Christ*, shall not have Life, but the Wrath
 " of God abide on him (1)."

I am sensible these will be thought very hard and severe Sayings, but they are, as you have seen clearly, founded on the Word of God, and perfectly agreeable to the Sentiments of all the other antient Writers of the Church. And I urge them not to pass the least Censure and Judgment upon any serious and devout Christians who are of a different Communion and Persuasion from our own, for whom there is no one living who hath greater Charity than myself, if they hold the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and are truly pious and sincere towards God, humble and modest in their Demeanour, and charitable towards their Brethren. But I only thought proper at this Time to lay them before you, the better to represent to you the great Danger and Mischief you may expose yourselves to by running after *gifted Men*, and in consequence thereof withdrawing yourselves from the Communion of the very best Church this Day in the World. And therefore let what hath been delivered upon this Head, from the Holy Scriptures and the Testimonies of the Primitive Writers of the Church, be a Caution to you to keep close to the Communion of the Establish'd Church, and to adhere to your appointed Pastors, whatever your Notions of the *New Birth* and *Election* may be. And I am confident you will find them as diligent and zealous, nay and much more so, in the promoting the great Affair of your eternal Salvation, than any of your New Teachers will ever be. For it hath been fatally observed, that most of the Divisions and other Mischiefs which have been raised in the Church of God, have been owing to crafty and designing Men, who have pretended to uncommon
 Gifts

(1) *Quisquis ab hac Catholica Ecclesia fuerit separatuss quam humiliter laudabiliter se vivere existimet, hoc solo scelere quod a Christi unitate disjunctus est, non habebit vitam, sed ira Dei manet super ipsum.* Agust. Epist. 152.

The English Reader may see these three last Citations in Archbishop Potter on Church Government, p. 15 and 18.

Gifts and supernatural Endowments. - And for this Reason you should always be upon your guard, and entertain the greater Jealousy and Suspicion of those who would deceive you by such Pretensions. And in case you should now and then perceive an unworthy Person in the Ministry of the Church, yet be not so unjust and unreasonable as to draw an Objection from hence (as is too commonly done) against the whole Order. For it is not to be expected, that, in so large a Number of Persons, there should not be found some who are *departed out of the Way*, and cause *many to stumble at the Law*, Malach. ii. 8. But I hope in God such as these are in Comparison but very few: Tho' be they never so few, they are too many to be endured under any Christian Administration. But remember that of the Twelve Apostles chosen by our Blessed Saviour Himself, *one had a Devil*, Joh. vi. 70. And in such a Case if you would act the Part of good Christians you should pray earnestly to God for the Conversion of any wicked Ministers of *Christ*, and if you have Power, you would do well to have them brought under the Censures of the Church for their just Admonition and Correction; and if it should be the hard Lot of any of you (and a very hard Lot I own it to be to any sober and serious Christian) to be placed under the immediate Care of an idle and vicious Minister, who is a Disgrace and Scandal to his holy Function: In such a Case I beg of you to consider, that the Effects of *Christ's* Ordinances are not in the least impaired, nor the Grace of the Sacraments diminished on Account of their being administred by the Hands of unworthy Men, as our Church hath wisely determined in her XXVIth Article. Or if your Prejudice and Aversion to such a Minister should be so great, (as there would indeed be sufficient Ground and Reason for it) that you cannot bear to communicate with him in the Service of the Church, nor to hear the Word preached by him without the utmost Indignation; then I would advise you to that (which I would do myself

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in such a Juncture) and that is, not to leave the Communion of the Church by reason of such a profligate Minister, but to repair to some other Parish Church in the Neighbourhood, where you may hear the Word of God to your Edification, and join in the publick Service with Heart and Devotion; and there is no Doubt to be made but that you would have the tacit Consent of your Bishop in so doing. I have often wondered indeed, that there should be found any Persons among those who wait at the Altar who should be wanting in this Respect, when they do not seem to be deficient in any others; and who should not presently perceive the absolute Necessity of a sober, diligent and pious Life and Conversation, to warm and enliven the Devotions of their People, and to give due Force and Efficacy to their Instructions. Nay, and that they are not put in mind thereof, by the very Garments which they wear, when they are engaged in the Service of the Church and administer the Sacraments; the Pureness of which is designed to be an Emblem of that Sanctity with which those Persons should be adorned who perform the sacred Functions; since as the Apostle observes, *Fine Linnen is the Righteousness of the Saints.* Rev. xix. 8. I have, I say, been often astonish'd at this, when the very Pagans themselves inserted it into the Definitions of an able Orator, that he must have the Estimation and Character of a good Man (*m*). And Mr. *Hobbes* himself rightly observes that "That which taketh away the Reputation of Sincerity, is the doing or saying such Things as appear to be Signs that what they require other Men to believe is not believed by themselves, all which Doings or Sayings are therefore call'd scandalous, because they be Stumbling-blocks that make Men to fall in the way of Religion (*n*)."

But since there ever have been and probably will always be some such disgraceful Persons in the Church, and even one of the

(*m*) *Si vero est bene dicendi scientia, quem nos finem sequimur ut orator sit in primis vir bonus. Quintil. Institut. lib. ii. cap. 16. Sit ergo nobis orator quem instituimus, — vir bonus dicendi peritus. Idem. lib. xii. cap. i.*

(*n*) *Leviath. Part I. chap. xii. pag. 58.*

the *Twelve Chosen* by infinite Wisdom itself was worse than any we can now complain of, the most prudent Rule of judging in this Case is to take the World as we find it, and not to make the Folly and Stupidity of others, the Occasion of our own falling. But tho' there are none of us of the Clergy, who will connive at the Faults of any of our own Order, but will be ready at all Times to censure and reproach them; yet I hope, and am well assured, that we do not deserve to be drawn and set forth in those black and horrid Colours, in which some of your New Teachers have represented us (o). They might have look'd into their own Journals and been there reminded of what shameful Vices they have acknowledged themselves to be guilty (p). And it would have become them to have *cast out the Beam that is in their own Eye*, before they endeavour to *pull the Mote out of the Eyes of their Brethren*. Matt. vii. 4. And the Reproaches which they have cast upon our Order, give us no Trouble and Concern on any other Account, than that they may possibly be the Means of laying a Prejudice in your way against our Communion. But I hope you will in this Case be endued with more Christian Charity, as well as manifest a better Sense and Judgment, than to think that railing against the Brethren, can possibly be a Mark and Character of those who are dignified with an extraordinary Degree and Measure of the Holy Spirit of God; since the Apostle places a *Railer* in Company with *Fornicators, Drunkards, and Idolaters*, with whom he will not allow us so much as to eat. 1 Cor. v. 11. *i. e.* in the lowest Sense of the Expression to have any intimate and familiar Conversation with them (q).

As for our Parts, whatever Thoughts either you or your new Teachers may entertain of us, we shall I hope
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(o) Vid. *Enthusiasm, &c. compar'd*, P. I. p. 16, 17. P. II. 125.

(p) *Idem*, Part. I. p. 31. Part II. p. 52, 60, 80, 83.

(q) Vid. *Hammond* and *Whitby* in loc.

by the Grace of God take heed to our Ministry which we have received of the Lord, that we fulfil it in every Respect, *Col. iv. 17.* And we shall not only preach the Word duly to you in our distinct Congregations, but shall be ready also to administer our Advice and Counsel to you privately on all proper Occasions; to visit you in your Sickness; to satisfy your Scruples, and resolve your Doubts; and nothing will yield us greater Pleasure than to be applied to by any of you in any Matter which may concern your eternal Salvation. And tho' thro' the Depredations of Popery, and the shameful Mismanagement of some of those who were Friends to the Reformation (*r*), the Maintenance of many of us is very small and inconsiderable, yet we are willing to take the Church as we find it; and are content with that Support which is settled upon us by the Laws, or derived from the free and voluntary Contributions of our People. And such of us who are in a State of Poverty and Hardship will comfort ourselves with this Consideration, *viz.* that if we faithfully discharge the important Trust we have undertaken, we shall at the last Day receive the greater Reward from our Righteous Judge, the less we have received at the Hands of Men; And no Pressures or Necessities of ours, how great soever, shall ever prevail upon us to use any sinister Methods and artful Contrivances to draw any Benefactions from our People. And tho' we think ourselves strictly bound to contend earnestly *for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, *Jude 3.* and to maintain the Christian Doctrine in its primitive Purity, yet I trust in God we shall do this in a truly Christian Manner, by charitable Dispositions to all pious and well-disposed Persons who differ from us, and by being at all Times willing and desirous to have a friendly and amicable Conversation with them. And when we have thus demeaned ourselves, I hope that this will

(*r*) Vid. *Heylin's History of the Reformation*, passim.

will be a powerful Means of removing your Prejudices against us, and preserving you in a stedfast and constant Communion with us in the Established Church. And, if our Exhortations and Conduct shall obtain this good Effect upon you, it will afford Matter of the greatest Joy and Delight to ourselves. But if all the Considerations which we can offer to you, will not gain your good Will and Affection towards us; if you will not endure sound Doctrine, and shall (I do not say through your Lusts, but from a fantastical Desire of Novelty) *heap to yourselves Teachers, having itching Ears*, 2 Tim. iv. 3, and if by this Means you put yourselves out of the ordinary Way of Salvation, by forsaking your proper Pastors, and committing your Souls to such Persons who have little else to recommend them but a vain and confident Pretence to extraordinary Illuminations and Conversations with God, &c. which is what the worst and vilest Heretics and Impostors in the former and latter Ages of the Church have ever laid claim to, and shall hereby in the End bring any Damage and Mischief upon your Souls; I call God to witness, that the Blame will lie wholly on yourselves, and not upon us. In which Case ours indeed will be the Grief and Sorrow, but the Issue and Event will be to yourselves *unprofitable*. Heb. xiii. 17. We shall I hope deliver our own Souls by our Righteousness. *Ezek. xiv. 20.* And tho' we shall have spent our Strength for nought, and laboured in vain, yet will our *Judgment be surely with the Lord, and our Work with our God*. Isa. xlix. 4. And with regard to the heavy Reflections which, as I have before took Notice, are cast upon us by your New Teachers, tho' we shall never in this Case recriminate, since our Holy Religion plainly forbids us to render to any one *Evil for Evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise Blessing*, 1 Pet. iii. 9, and therefore we heartily forgive them, and pray to God to forgive them also; yet we humbly think that there is so much due to the Dignity of our holy Function and Character as to let them know that we are above their

Contempt, and despise their Censure; and may, in Consequence thereof, without any Breach of Modesty apply to ourselves that excellent Remark, which a famous Orator made to a great Magistrate at his Entrance upon his Office, (with a Variation only of Number and Persons) when he told him, That after the most upright and faithful Discharge of his Province he must expect the Insults and Reproaches of some unworthy and malicious Persons: For thus saith he to him, *Ab omnibus merito laudaberis nisi ab iis a quibus non laudari maxima laus est.*

The End of the Address.





THE
Duty of SELF - DENIAL
AND
TAKING UP THE CROSS
Duly Stated and Considered,
IN A
S E R M O N

Lately Preached in the Parish Church of

C R A I K E,

In the County of *Durham,*

By ALEXANDER JEPHSON, A. B.
Rector of the said Parish.

Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come. 1 Tim. iv. 8.

It is very rational to allow ourselves a moderate Taste of lawful and innocent Pleasures, without suffering them to overwhelm and drown us : But this is to be fixed as an inviolable Rule, that no Pleasure must be purchased at so dear a Rate as the Neglect or Transgression of our Duty. *Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations, B. II. c. 4. §. 11.*



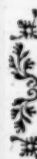
Day of Self-Denial

TAKING UP THE CROSS

ST. RALPH

C. R. A. K. A.

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Matt. xvi. 24.

Then said JESUS to His Disciples, If any Man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.

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IN order to understand the true Sense and Meaning of these Words, it will be highly necessary to consider the Occasion of them, which was this: When Our Blessed Saviour was discoursing to His Disciples concerning His approaching Death and Sufferings, St. Peter presently rebuked Him, saying, *Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not happen unto Thee.* But he turned and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an Offence to me, for thou savourest not the Things that be of God, i. e. Thou hast no Regard to the Honour and Glory of God, in accomplishing the Salvation of Mankind by my Death and Sufferings; but thou savourest those that be of Men: i. e. Your Thoughts are wholly taken up with the many and great Blessings and Advantages which those of your Nation vainly imagine and promise to themselves from the Temporal Kingdom of the Messias; and then follow the Words of the Text, Then said Jesus to his Disciples, If any Man will come after me, i. e. will profess himself to be my Disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me, i. e. Let him renounce all the Riches, Honours, and Pleasures of this present World, whenever the Enjoyment of them proves to be inconsistent with any Part of that Duty which he owes to God; and let him patiently submit to the severest Afflictions, and most tormenting Deaths, whenever the Glory of God and*
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the Necessities and Interests of His Church require it of him.

The only considerable Difficulty in which Passage of Scripture is exactly to determine how far the Force and Signification of the Words are to be extended, and whether the Doctrine herein delivered by Our Lord was calculated only for the Primitive Times of Persecution, or that it be a constant and standing Law and Precept in all Ages and Generations of the World. And it will be the more necessary to take this Matter into our serious Consideration, not only by reason of the many and great Mistakes which too many Christians have fell into upon this Point, but also because an Enthusiastical Set of Preachers, who are wandering up and down through the whole Nation to destroy and unsettle all the reasonable Notions of Religion, and to throw Men into the utmost Distraction and Confusion, have most wretchedly mistaken the Sense of Our Blessed Saviour in this Place, as not only concluding it to be a Law universally binding to all Christians, but that its Obligation reaches to the farthest Extent of the strict and literal Meaning thereof: Insomuch, that, according to them, if any one professes himself a Christian, he must not only renounce all such Enjoyment of worldly Things as becomes inconsistent with his Duty and a good Conscience, but he must moreover part with all his temporal Estate and Riches, and discontinue all such Gratifications as are beyond the necessary Demands of Nature, and pay little or no Regard to any Superiority and Distinction of Earthly Quality and Pre-eminence, and not only be ready and disposed in his Mind to submit patiently to all such Afflictions and Persecutions which it shall please God to expose him to for the Benefit of himself, and the Advantage of Mankind, but also in some Measure to bring them voluntarily upon himself, by living in a continual State of Penance, Mortification, and Self-denial of any considerable Pleasures of this present World. A hard Doctrine this! and we may reasonably say, in the Words
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of the Disciples on another Occasion, *Who can bear it?* John vi. 60. As if God did envy his Creatures the Blessings of His Providence, and that He had set the Happiness of this World and that which is come at an irreconcilable Distance from each other; and that Persecution and Suffering were such an essential Condition of *Christ's* Gospel, and in themselves so well-pleasing and acceptable to God, that a Man should be made so much the happier in the next World, as he was the more wretched and miserable in this.

In order to shew the Weakness of which Notion, and to ascertain the true Sense and Meaning of the Words of my Text, I shall, *first*, enquire how far the Doctrine of Self-denial and taking up the Cross is to be understood and extended as a necessary indispensable Condition of *Christ's* Gospel: And then, *secondly*, I shall consider the Necessity thereof to render any one a good Christian. And,

First then, We are to consider how far the Doctrine of Self-denial and taking up the Cross is to be understood and extended as a necessary and indispensable Condition of *Christ's* Gospel.

Now it is certain that in the strict Sense of this Doctrine, as it implies an absolute Renunciation of the Things of this World, the entire parting with Mens Estates and Fortunes, and the submitting to the most bitter Deaths and Sufferings, it is chiefly to be understood with relation to the Primitive Times of Persecution, when Men were oftentimes obliged to give up their worldly Goods and Possessions, yea and many Times their Lives too, or to disclaim their Religion. This is very clear and evident from the Context: For after Our Lord had lain down the Doctrine of Self-Denial and taking up the Cross, in the Words of the Text, He immediately gives the Reason in the Verse following: *For whosoever will save his Life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his Life for my sake shall find it.* Which Words are plainly relative to a State of Persecution, and cannot with any Sense be alledged as a Ground and Reason
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of these Duties in the settled and peaceable Times of the Church. For then the Argument must have been laid upon this or the like Foundation, *viz.* You must utterly deny yourselves all worldly Enjoyments, and live in a continual State of Suffering and Persecution; because otherwise you cannot attain to that divine Temper and Disposition of Mind which is necessary to qualify you for the Kingdom of God; or because the Nature and Condition of future Glory is such, that Men will shine the brighter and more resplendent therein, the more painfully they have gone through the Furnace of Affliction in this present World: But since Our Blessed Saviour argues only from the Impossibility of preserving their Lives, and saving their Souls, upon any other Terms than the Denial of themselves and taking up their Cross, this manifestly evinces that the Doctrine of the Text is chiefly calculated for the first Times of Persecution, when, as Our Lord observes in the parallel Place of *St. Luke*, Men were obliged to take up their Cross *daily*, and follow *Christ*, Chap. ix. 23. And, as *St. Paul* declares, *all that would live godly in Jesus Christ were to suffer Persecution*, 2 *Tim.* iii. 12. Not that it is the Meaning of Our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles in these and the like Places of Scripture, that, even in those Primitive Times, every good Christian was unavoidably bound to suffer Persecution, but only to be ready and prepared in his Mind to undergo it, if the Providence of God should call him thereto; as it was very probable he would do in that dangerous and difficult Season. For thus Men are often said in Scripture to do that which they are firmly resolved and disposed in their Hearts to do. In which Sense *St. Paul*, speaking of himself and other Christians long before his Martyrdom, says, *We which live are always delivered to Death for Jesus's Sake*, 2 *Cor.* iv. 11: *i. e.* In these hazardous Times of Persecution we are always ready and willing to lay down our Lives for the Testimony of the Gospel. Nay, we find that, when Persecution did actually arise in the Church, the Disciples of *Christ* were not absolutely obliged in all Cases

to stand the Brunt of it, but they might lawfully escape and avoid it, if they could do so by fair and honourable Means. For thus Our Saviour Himself gave this Instruction to His Apostles, that when they were persecuted in one City, they should *flee into another*, Matt. x. 23. From all which it is very apparent that the Doctrine of Self-denial and taking up the Cross, in the strict Sense of the Text, is chiefly to be accommodated to the Primitive Times of Persecution, and cannot be extended to the general State and Condition of the Church, any further than that every good Christian should be so firmly disposed and prepared in his Mind to such severe Instances of Self-denial and Sufferings whenever the Providence of God shall demand it of him. But what then? Are Men now in these Days entirely exempted from the Duties of Self-denial and taking up the Cross, and at full Liberty to enjoy their Fortunes, and to indulge themselves in the Pleasures of the World, as shall be most agreeable to their Inclinations? One would imagine indeed by the strange Conduct of too many Persons, who give themselves up to a continual Course of Idleness, Voluptuousness and Pleasure, that they think themselves not to be under the least Restraints in this Particular. But this is a very great Mistake, and of more dangerous Consequence than the opposite Extreme. For the Doctrine of Self-denial and taking up the Cross is still in Force in the full Extent and Rigour of it, in all such Instances as God shall expressly require at our Hands. We are as much obliged now to sell our Estates and give to the Poor that we may have *Treasure in Heaven*, and to lay down our Lives for *Christ's* Sake as the Disciples were in the very first Age of the Gospel, if God shall lay upon us a particular Injunction so to do. And even in the settled State and Condition of the Church, the Doctrine of Self-denial and taking up the Cross is obligatory and binding upon all Christians as well in the extraordinary as the ordinary Instances thereof.

As to the *First*. Tho' we may now and then (as shall be seen hereafter) enjoy the Pleasures of Life in

due Proportion, yet at some particular Seasons we are obliged to deny ourselves the common Necessaries of Life, and to give up ourselves to strict Fasting and Prayer, whenever the express Commands of our Governors, either in Church or State, or the more immediate Necessities of our own Souls demand it of us. And at such a Time especially, we must *mortify* our *Members which are upon the Earth*, as the Apostle directs, *Col. iii. 5.* And indeed Mortification is so far a constant and indispensable Duty of the Gospel, that we must always be mindful to subdue the Flesh to the Spirit; and that we do by no means suffer any of the Enjoyments of this World to engross too much of our precious Time, nor to gain such an Ascendant over us as to quench the divine and spiritual Life in our Hearts. *For if we thus live after the Flesh we shall die; but, if we through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, we shall live, Rom. viii. 13.* And indeed we should be more than ordinary careful in this Particular; since if so great a Man as *St. Paul* found it necessary to keep his *Body under*, and to *bring it into Subjection, lest by any Means after he had preached to others, he himself should be a Cast-away, 1 Cor. ix. 27,* we who are great Sinners (and especially in these licentious Times) may well think that we are in the utmost Danger if we give up ourselves without Remorse and Concern to a continual Course of Idleness and sensual Gratifications. And so far must we always extend this Care and Vigilance over ourselves, as never to suffer any of our Affections, how engaging and delightful soever they may be to us, to make the least Inroad upon our Virtue: But as soon as we perceive the most distant Inclination of that kind, to quell and subdue it immediately, tho' the doing of it should be as painful and disagreeable to us, as the plucking out a right Eye, or the cutting off a right Hand, *Matt. v. 29, 30.* And then,

Secondly, With regard to the common and ordinary Instances of Self-denial and taking up the Cross, they will for ever engage and oblige us in these following
 Regards:

Respects: And, *first*, we must always deny ourselves the Enjoyment of those Pleasures, how agreeable and entertaining soever they may be to us, which are in the least Degree and Measure unlawful and sinful: For *the Soul that sinneth it shall die*, saith the Prophet, Ezek. xviii. 4. And the Apostle assures us, that *Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish shall be upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil*, Rom. ii. 8, 9. But this is so very plain and clear a Case, that no Man that believes the Scriptures, or indeed acknowledges the common Principles of Natural Religion can possibly be ignorant of it. And therefore to what hath been said upon this Head I shall only add thus much, that the Enjoyment of any earthly Pleasure will be so far from excusing us in the Commission of Sin and Wickedness, that we shall not be justified in the least Transgression, tho' we might thereby gain to ourselves the whole World. For, as Our Lord observes with the greatest Wisdom, *what is a Man profited if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own Soul?* Matt. xvi. 26. But,

Secondly, Tho' we may lawfully at proper Seasons enjoy the Pleasures and partake of the Diversions of the World, if they are in themselves innocent and inoffensive, yet we must not for the Sake of them at any Time neglect any one Part of Christian Duty. For God hath very distinctly commanded us to *love Him with all our Hearts, and with all our Souls*, Matt. xxii. 37. And Our Saviour hath required this as a Proof of our Love to Him, that we *keep His Commandments*, John xiv. 15. And that by keeping the Commandments of God is meant the keeping them universally is evident from St. James: For (saith he) *whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend (i. e. knowingly and wilfully) in one Point, he is guilty of all*, chap. ii. 10. And Our Lord extends this Obligation even to the very lowest Instances of Christian Duty: For (saith he) *whosoever shall break one of these least Commandments, shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. v. 19. Nay and further Our Saviour expressly declares, that *if any Man come to Him, and hate not his*

Father, and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea and his own Life also, i. e. If according to the *Jewish* Manner of Expression (a), he does not shew a less Regard to these Things than to the Duty which he owes to God, he cannot be His Disciple, *Luke* xiv. 26. And if this be so, that our Attachment to the most valuable Blessings of this Life will by no means excuse the Neglect of the very least of God's Laws, surely those Persons must be in a most dangerous Condition, who for the Sake of Company and worldly Pleasure shall frequently omit some of the Principal and Important Duties of Religion, such as the Reading of the Scriptures, the Devotions of the Closet, and the Prayers in the Family. For Our Lord very plainly enjoins us to read the Scriptures, *John* v. 39; and strictly requires us to *pray always, and not to faint*, *Luke* xviii. 1. And St. Paul speaks much to the same Purpose, that we should *pray without ceasing*, *1 Thess.* v. 17; by which is not meant, as some Enthusiastical Persons have vainly imagined, that we must be continually on our Knees, and at our Devotions (b): Or that Men who have themselves and Families to maintain by their Work and Labour, are bound to leave their necessary Business even upon the Week Days, whenever they have an Opportunity of joining in the Service of the Church, as hath been of late suggested (c). For this is more than God requires of them; and tho' I would not by any means speak any thing to the Discouragement of Publick Devotion, and really think that poor Men themselves when they can conveniently attend on the Week Days upon the Public Prayers without any considerable Injury and Detriment to their Business, cannot possibly employ their Time better, and should not neglect such an Opportunity of paying their Devotions to God; yet on the other
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(a) See above in the *Address*, p. 18.

(b) Vid. *Carve's Lives of the Fathers*, p. 725, where you have an Account of the horrid Impurities of those Hereticks, who pretended to these extraordinary Devotions.

(c) See a remarkable Passage to this purpose cited by Dr Stabbing, in his *Discourse on Religious Delusion*, p. 21, in Marg.

Side I cannot but assent to the Judgment of an excellent Divine upon this Occasion, that they are very unskilful Preachers who would persuade such Persons to attend upon the Public Service at these Times, to the Neglect of their necessary Callings: ' And there is ' no Question but it is a great Sin for a Man to fail in ' his Trade or Occupation by running often to Prayers; ' it being a Demonstration itself, tho' the Scripture had ' never said it, that we please God most when we are ' doing most Good: And how can we do more Good ' than by a sober honest Industry to provide for our own ' Household, and to endeavour to have to give to him ' that needeth (d)?' And with regard to the Expression itself, of *praying without ceasing*, it means no more than that Men should every Day they live pray frequently, at least two or three Times, to God, after the Example of the *Psalmist*, *Psal.* lv. 17, without Intermission. And Men are said in Scripture to do that continually which they perform at the regular Times and Seasons. Thus the Apostles were said to be continually in the Temple praising God, *Luke* xxiv. 53. And how this is to be understood St. Luke tells us, *Acts* ii. 46, where he observes they were daily in the Temple, which is explained by *chap.* iii. 1, where he lets us know that they went into the Temple at the *Hour of Prayer*. And when the Apostle enjoins us to *pray without ceasing*, the Expression doubtless alludes to the daily Sacrifice of a Lamb, which was offered up in the Temple at *Jerusalem*, and which tho' it was never offered up any oftener than twice in the Day, at the third and the ninth Hour, *Exod.* xxix. 38, 39, yet is called in Scripture the *continual* Burnt-Offering, *Numb.* xxviii. 24, 31.

As to the Performance of private Devotion in the Closet, all Christians are agreed at least in the Obligation of the Duty, if not in the Practice.

And with respect to the great Duty of praying with our Families every Morning and Evening, tho' I will
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(d) Dr *Coxall's* *Aesop's Fables*, in his *Reflections*, p. 102.

not pass any severe Censure upon those who neglect it, but shall leave every one to judge for himself in this Particular; yet this I will take upon me to affirm, that the Observation of this Duty will not only be of the utmost Benefit and Advantage to every single Family, as it naturally tends to instil a Sense of Piety into all the Members thereof, but it will be also very considerable in its Influence upon the Religion and Morals of the whole Nation: And I believe it will be hard to find any Divine of Note in all *Europe* who hath treated upon the Duty of Prayer to God, that did not esteem the Devotions of the Family to be a necessary and essential Part of it. I shall beg Leave to put you in Mind that the Author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, that very best Book in the World next to the *Bible*, is very earnest and zealous for the Performance of this Duty (e). And the great and renowned Archbishop *Tillotson*, the Glory of our Church and Kingdom, had such a Sense of the Necessity of Family-Devotion that he will not allow those Persons who neglect it to be esteemed a Family of Christians, or indeed to have any Religion at all (f). And if this be so, you may easily judge with yourselves what a heavy Account you will have to give to God at the last Day, if you can contentedly spend whole Days and Nights together (as too many Persons shamefully do) in Drinking, Gaming, Company and Diversion, and at the same Time shall think much of a few Minutes (for it would require no more) to be employed in your Families in Prayer to God, the great Author of our Being. And consider seriously whether such a Conduct can possibly be reconciled with that perfect Love which we owe to God, that Contempt of the World, and that heavenly and divine Conversation, which are strictly demanded of us by the Rules of our Holy Religion.

What hath been said here concerning the Neglect of Family Religion, will hold much more strongly
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(e) Chap. V. §. 12.

(f) *Tillotson*, Vol. I. p. 596.

with regard to the horrible Profanation of the *Lord's Day*, in relation both to the publick and private Duties thereof. For the Observation of the *Seventh Day* is strictly commanded by God in sundry Laws and Precepts both in the *Old* and *New Testament*. And God shewed the great Regard he had for this Law by the terrible and exemplary Punishment which He inflicted upon the first Transgressor of it, *Numb. xv. 32, &c.* And since God hath so expressly commanded this Day to be kept holy, there is no Authority, or Custom, or Example, tho' it were of all the Kings and Princes in the World, can prescribe against Him (*g*). And therefore to neglect this Day, and especially the Public Worship of the Church, which is the principal Duty thereof, for the Sake of any Company, how great soever their Quality may be, or any worldly Interest and Pleasure, and this in one single Instance, unless it be in Case of Sicknefs or absolute Necessity and Charity, is a manifest Violation of this Duty of Self-denial so solemnly laid by Our Lord in the Text upon all His Disciples. And surely then the Transgression of those Men must be very heinous who make a common Practice of profaning this Day, by travelling thereupon, in the very Time of God's Public Worship, and by Drinking and Gaming at this Season, to the great Dishonour of God, the Corruption of our Youth, the Reproach of our Government, and the Scandal of our Church and Religion: Since *Machiavel* and *Hobbes*, and many other Atheistical Writers have themselves frankly acknowledged that the public Establishment and Profession of Religion is absolutely necessary to the Well-being and Happiness of any Kingdom (*h*). But,

Thirdly,

(*g*) Let us again and again assure ourselves of this great Truth, and always keep it in Mind, *viz.* That no Custom or Fashion, no common Practice, or even Authority in the whole World, can render any thing innocent, or be a just Excuse for it, if it be found to be contrary to any part of that Law (rightly understood) which God hath given us as a constant Rule to walk by.

Archbishop *Synges* *Rule of Self-Examination*, p. 27.

(*h*) *Vid. Machiavel's Discourse on Livy*, Lib. i. cap. xi. *Hobbes's Leviathan*, cap. xii. Towards

Thirdly, Tho' we are unquestionably bound, by the Doctrine of our Text, to refrain from every Thing which is in the least Degree unlawful and sinful, and by no means to omit the lowest Instance of Christian Duty for the sake of the Interests and Pleasures of this World, yet, on the other Side, we are not obliged by any Rules of our Religion (unless God shall expressly require it of us) to sell our Estates and give them to the Poor, nor to debarr ourselves the Enjoyment of any innocent and lawful Pleasures at proper Times, and with due Moderation. For as to that Passage in *Luke xii. 33.* which is one of the Principal Texts which our present Enthusiasts alledge to this Purpose, it is impertinently urged by them on this Occasion. For when our Saviour in that Place of Scripture says to his Disciples, *sell that ye have and give Alms*, He does not deliver Himself by way of exprefs Command, as he did to the young Man in *Matt. xix. 21. (i).* Nor does He there lay down a Law that shall be universally binding in all ages of the Church; but as many learned writers have well observed, he only speaks according to the Genius of the *Jewish* language, by representing to them how they should be disposed in their minds to act, upon any particular Emergency and necessity. And there are many Papers of Scripture in which this Form of Expression is used, and the words delivered in an imperative and commanding style when they must necessarily be understood only by way of qualification and supposition: I will at present mention only one which is incontestable, and that is in *Luke xx. 36*; where

Towards keeping Mankind in Order, it is necessary that there should be some Religion professed, and even established; which cannot be done without publick Worship. And were it not for that sense of Virtue, which is preserved (so far as it is preserved) by national Forms and Habits of Religion, Men would soon lose it all, run wild, prey upon one another, and do what else the worst of Savages do.

Woolaston's Religion of Nature delineated, p. 24. See also *Dr Prideaux's Connect.* 8vo. Vol. II. p. 561, 562.

(i) See the *Address*, p. 35, &c.

where Our Lord upon the *Jewish* Officers being ready at hand to apprehend Him, says thus to His Disciples, *He that bath no Sword, let him sell his Garment and buy one.* The Stile is plainly imperative; and yet no Man of Sense ever imagined our Saviour required His Disciples to provide themselves Swords, to defend Him against His Enemies. For that is not only contrary to the great End and Design of our Blessed Saviour's coming into the World, which was to lay down His Life for the Salvation of Mankind, but it is also manifestly inconsistent with the whole Context, and particularly with our Lord's rebuking *Peter* for drawing his Sword upon that Occasion, *John xviii. 11.* But the Words are only a symbolical Representation of the great Danger of our Saviour's Condition: As much as to say, that if the Matter was to be ordered and managed by human Force rather than by Prayer and Vigilance, there would have been the highest Necessity of furnishing themselves with Arms for His Defence, as a learned Critic hath rightly observed upon the Place *. And the same manner of Expression is used in the Text we are now considering. Our Saviour means no more than that His Disciples should sit so loose in their Affections to the Things of this World, and have such a superior Regard to Heavenly Treasures, that for the sake of them they should be eminent and abounding in the Works of Charity, and be ready at all Times to part with their whole Estates and give them to the Poor, when God should expressly require it, or the Necessities of the Church should manifestly demand it of them. And it will be no Objection to this, that the first *Christians* at *Jerusalem* did actually give up their Estates upon this Occasion †, *and had all things common*, *Acts ii. 44, 45.* For this was no more than a voluntary Compact and Agreement among themselves (tho' probably not without the Direction of the Holy Spirit) which was of singular Use and Service to the Church at that Season; but never designed to be drawn into

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(*) Vatablus, in loc.

(†) See Mr *Lau's* Spirit of Prayer, Part I. p. 86.

general Law and Practice, as is evident from several Passages of Scripture, where we soon after find a manifest Distinction made between the Rich and the Poor; and that the former are frequently exhorted to be liberal in their Charity, and particularly upon every Lord's Day to lay by some Part of their worldly Goods for the Poor according as God hath prospered them, *1 Cor. xvi. 2.* And that a greater or lesser Reward is promised to them in another World in proportion to their charitable Distributions in this. *1 Tim. vi. 17, &c. 2 Cor. ix. 1 to 8.* And it is further demonstrable from the Acknowledgment which St. Peter made to Ananias, when he passed Sentence upon him, with his Wife Sapphira, for their heinous Sin of Sacrilege in keeping back Part of the Price of the Land sold by them, the whole of which they pretended they had dedicated to God and His Church; viz that whilst it remained it was his own and after it was sold it was in his own Power, i. e. his peculiar Right and Property. *Acts v. 4.* Of all which Places of Scripture no possible Sense could be made, if Men had not their Fortunes in their own Hands, but had disposed of them into one common Bank and Treasury: The Expression therefore in *Acts ii. 44.* of *having all Things in common*, must either signify a voluntary Compact amongst the first *Christians* to sell their Estates for the Benefit of their poor Brethren; or, as many learned Men have very wisely observed, it may imply no more than that the Charity of these Persons was so abundant and overflowing, that they did in a manner hold their Estates in common, by being ready to part with them on any Occasion when the public Good of the Church should require it (*k*), as many of them actually did at this Season; but not that they were under any Obligation from the Laws of the Gospel to do so (*l*), which is manifestly inconsistent

(*k*) *Vid. Whitby in loc.*

(*l*) *Omnia communia Ufu videlicet charitatis quæ certa ratione exercebatur, ut ex proximo versu constat. Nimum igitur sunt impudentes qui Platonis delirium sequuti MEUM & TUUM tolli Evangelistæ doctrina ex hominum societate volunt. Beza in loc.*

sistent with several other Passages of Scripture which I have just now recited.

And so far is the Holy Scripture from giving any Encouragement to that Levelling Principle which our present Enthusiasts now so warmly contend for, and from supposing with them that there is little or no Allowance to be made for the different Expences of Men according to the Difference of their Quality and Station, that in many Places it very clearly intimates an eminent Superiority of Condition in some Persons above others, which cannot possibly be supported without an Enlargement of Expence and Fortune (*m*): And our Blessed Saviour Himself very plainly observed to His Disciples, that they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in Kings Courts, Luke vii. 25: without passing the least Censure upon them for so doing (*n*). And St. Paul lays it down as a fixed Rule, that Parents are bound to lay up for their Children (*o*), 2 Cor. xii. 14, and accounts That Man to be worse than an Infidel who neglects to make Provision for his Family, 1 Tim. v. 8. And indeed tho' it is certain that Temporal Riches and Prosperity are no Part of the Sanction of the Gospel, as they were expressly so of the Law of Moses, yet I defy any Man to prove from any Part of the *New Testament*, that they are so utterly excluded from the Gospel Covenant, as that it is impossible for a Man to be a good Christian, and at the same time rich and honourable in this World, provided he does not trust in his Riches (for it is only of such Persons that our Saviour hath pronounced that severe Sentence in Mark x. 24, 25, of the Difficulty of their entering into the Kingdom of Heaven) but that he behaves himself in

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(*m*) See 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14. Rom. xiii. 7.

(*n*) Ἰν ἰουδαίῳ καὶ ἐν δόξῳ. i. e. quo utuntur viri nobiles & suis opibus illustres. Beza in loc.

(*o*) Hinc fit ut etiam citra auxilium legis civilis prima bonorum successio liberis deferatur, quia creduntur parentes illis ut corporis sui partibus, non tantum de necessariis sed et de his quæ ad vitam suavius honestiusque transigendam pertinent quam uberrime voluisse prospectum, ab eo maxime tempore, quo ipsi rebus suis frui non possunt. Grot. de Jure Belli & Pacis, Lib. ii. Cap. vii. §. 5.

his high Station, (as it cannot be denied but that many of the greatest Men have done, and as bad as the world now is there no doubt but that many still do) with singular Piety, Humility, Charity and Moderation. And it is certain that the throwing down all Distinctions of Men in this World, and reducing them to an Equality of Fortune, (which our frantic Enthusiasts are now aiming at, like the *German Anabaptists* formerly, till they can get the Riches of the World into their own Hands (*p*), and then I'll engage for them they will immediately see the Necessity of Property) would be of the utmost mischievous Consequence to Mankind, as it would at once destroy all the considerable Trade and Commerce of Nations, put an effectual Bar to the necessary Exercises of Mechanics and Husbandry; encourage the Idle and Profligate to live upon the Labours of the Industrious and Diligent, and by that Means throw all Things into the greatest Disorder and Confusion. And therefore surely it must be a very unworthy Thought of our Dear Saviour to imagine that it should be established by Him as a necessary and essential Part of His Holy Gospel.

What hath been said of Riches holds equally true of the Pleasures of this Life. It is not inconsistent with the Christian Profession to enjoy them at their proper Seasons, and within their due Bounds and Limits. We may now to use the Words of *Solomon*, *eat our Bread with Joy, and drink our Wine with a merry Heart* under the Gospel, as well as they might do under the Law, *Ecc. ix. 7*. And it is the Character of the Son of Man Himself, that he came eating and drinking, in Opposition to *John the Baptist's* Rigour and Austerity. And our Lord work'd a signal Miracle at *Cana in Galilee*, by turning the Water into Wine at the Marriage Feast,

(*p*) Vid. *Sleidan. Commentar. Lib. x.* before cited in the *Address*, p. 37.

Feast, for the Dignity of the Bridegroom, and the Honour of the Festival (q), *John* 2. and he was also present at that grand Entertainment which *St. Matthew* made at his being called to be His Disciple, *Luke* v. 29. *Matt.* ix. 9. 10; which plainly shews that it is in no wise

(q) A late learned Writer, who hath gone very deeply into the Scheme of Methodism, with regard to the Rigours and Austerities, required by the new Teachers of their Disciples, is so miserably gruelled at this passage of *St John*, that he will not allow it to be true Wine, the Juice of the Grape, into which the Water was here turned, but a heavenly kind of Wine, which had not the quality of common Wine, but tended to allay the Heat and Disorder of the former Drinking; by which I profess I do not understand what he means, unless it be the divine and heavenly Conversation of our Saviour. And yet so fatal is the Witchcraft of Enthusiasm, that he will not grant that there was any more Water turned into Wine, than in that one Cup, which was carried to the Ruler of the Feast. ver. 8, 9. And if so, it will be difficult to understand, how this one Cup could allay the Disorder of the Drinking in the other Guests at the Entertainment, and why our Lord should order six large Vessels to be filled with Water, only to turn so small a Portion of it into this heavenly Wine for the Ruler of the Feast. To this idle notion therefore, we will oppose the Judgment of the great *Grotius*, viz. that when *Christ* said to the Servants, *Fill the Water-pots with Water*, there was no other Liquor mixed therewith, that the Truth of the Miracle might more clearly appear: so that the Change was in the Water-pots, and not in any Cups which might be drawn from them. And with regard to the Fact itself: It is not brought in as the Parables are, for the Illustration of some moral Truth; but it is represented as a real History, or else there is no such in the four Gospels. And in the eleventh Verse of the Chapter, the Apostle calls it the beginning of *Christ's* Miracles. And in the fourth Chapter, when our Lord had cured the Nobleman's Son, who was sick at Capernaum, he adds in the last Verse of that Chapter, *This is again the second Miracle which Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.* But now if the Transaction in *Cana* was not truly Miraculous, I would earnestly desire our Author to let us know which was the first Miracle the Apostle speaks of, for there is no other but the Miracle we are now considering mention'd in the History. The Account therefore of this Writer is a monstrous Perversion of the Holy Scriptures, to serve a wretched and illnatured Hypothesis; and I am loth to put him in mind of what *St Polycarp* saith upon this Occasion in his *Epist. ad Phillippens.* §. 7. viz. That the Man who perverts the Oracles of the Lord to his own Lusts, is the First-born of Satan.

wise unlawful at some proper Seasons to indulge ourselves in a moderate Enjoyment of the Satisfaction and Pleasures of this Life. And we might otherwise justly ask to what purpose hath God given us *richly all things to enjoy*, if it were displeasing to Him that we should enjoy them? *1 Tim. vi. 17.* Why hath He on every Side surrounded us with His Blessings, if it will in the End prove a Curse to us to partake of them? And for what Design hath he enclosed the most precious Jewels in the very Bowels of the Earth, if they were not appointed for the Ornament of Mankind and the Distinctions of Quality? And to say no more, it would be very absurd and incongruous that the Vallies themselves when they are filled with Corn should *laugh and sing*, *Psal. lxx. 13.* if at the same time the Lords of this Creation, for whom all the Delights of Nature were originally designed, must of Necessity be overwhelmed with Sadness and Melancholy. But then we must be very careful that we do not fall into any Extremes and fatal Mistakes in this Matter. Tho' we are not bound to part with our Estates, unless God shall expressly require it of us, as hath been clearly shewn, yet we should carefully remember that we are not in this World strictly speaking Proprietors of our Fortunes, but Stewards; and consequently that we are not left at liberty to use them as we please, but according to our Master's Will: And for that Reason we must not squander them away in Riot and Luxury and in extravagant Gaming, as too many Persons now inconsiderately do; and tho' they abound in good Sense and Wisdom in other respects, do herein betray the greatest Imprudence and Indiscretion, by committing the entire Dependence and Support as well as the Dignity and Reputation of Themselves and Families to the desperate and uncertain Issue of Hazard and Chance; but we must manage them wisely and frugally, and employ a considerable Part of them in pious and charitable Uses. And tho' we may now and then lawfully enjoy the Pleasures of Life, yet we must

must take good Heed that we so *use this World, as not abusing it*, 1 Cor. vii. 31. And how agreeable soever any of the Delights of the World may be to us, yet we must never for the sake of them commit any thing that is sinful, nor omit the least Part of Christian Duty, nor spend too much of our precious Time in the Enjoyment of them, for which we must give a strict Account to God at the last Day; and which must be regularly employed in the Works of our Callings, in the Spiritual Exercises of Religion, and particularly in a diligent Reading of the Holy Scriptures. And after all that can be said of Pleasure, since on the other Side it is certain that *Man is born to Trouble as the Sparks fly upwards*, Job v. 7; and *thro' much Tribulation we must enter into the Kingdom of God*, Acts xiv. 22; we should therefore be always prepared to meet our God, as the Prophet speaks, *Amos iv. 12. i. e.* we should bear all the Calamities and Afflictions of this Life with Patience, and whensoever it shall please our Lord to call us to Sufferings, we must be ready at all Times chearfully to *take up our Cross and follow Him*.

And thus having clearly and fully stated the Doctrine of Self-denial and taking up the Cross, there will be less Occasion of spending much Time in the

Second Place, To shew the Necessity thereof to render any one a good Christian: For this hath been in great measure considered already by signifying, that we must deny ourselves the Enjoyment of any Thing which is in the least Degree unlawful and sinful, or inconsistent with the very lowest Part of Christian Duty: To what has been said therefore it will be only necessary to add this Consideration, *viz.* that *no Man can serve two Masters, for either he will love the one, and hate the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other: Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*, Matt. vi. 24. And therefore, as the Apostle directs, *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John ii. 15. And if we do not love God,

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we shall not keep His Commandments, *John* xiv. 15; and if we do not keep His Commandments, we cannot possibly be saved, because as our Saviour assures us, *Not every one that saith unto Him, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of His Father which is in Heaven.* *Matt.* vii. 21. Let us then consider this Matter seriously, and especially at this Time, be extremely careful that we do not give any Offence to the Adversaries of our Church by our Impieties and Excesses: And tho' we may lawfully in some Measure enjoy the World, yet none of its Enjoyments can surely be of any great Value in themselves, because *the Fashion of the World itself passeth away*, *1 Cor.* vii, 31. And since we find by Experience, that all the Pleasures of this Life are empty and trifling, so that we may justly say with the *Wise Man*, *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*, *Eccl.* i. 2. For this Reason let us never set them up in Competition with the true and effectual Satisfaction of the Peace of Conscience, and the Hopes of God's Love and Favour. And because it is certain we must soon die, and leave all Things in this World behind us, therefore the sooner we wean our Affections from the Things of this Life, it will be the better for us, as it will make us the more willing to leave the World, whenever it shall please God to call us out of it. But however, so long as we live in the World, let us be sure to enjoy it with great Moderation and Temperance; and therefore let us never be so foolish and bewitched, as for the Sake of the trifling Interests and Pleasures thereof to forfeit that immense Happiness and Glory which God hath prepared for them that love Him; such as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive*, *1 Cor.* ii. 9. Of which that we may all be Partakers I pray God in His Infinite Mercy to grant, for the Sake of Our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, to Whom with the Father and the Blessed Spirit be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour and Glory, Might, Worship and Dominion, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

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